

Foreign Military Studies Office

OEWATCH

FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES FROM THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ENTERPRISE



Special Essays:

China's Stance on Ukraine: An Extended Reach for Balance & Global Waves From China's Great Domestic Rebalancing

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“Turkey wants to be a regional power and shares...Israel’s views on issues such as the Iranian nuclear threat and the Syrian civil war. Ankara is also keen on extending economic ties with Israel, including the export of natural gas...”

OE Watch Commentary: After Israel’s March 2013 apology to Turkey for the “operational mistakes” made during the May 2010 flotilla incident, many believed that the strained relations between the two countries would improve immediately. Recently there had been signs that the two countries were on the brink of reconciliation after almost four years of frozen diplomatic relations and a year of negotiations. The two sides were working out the final details of an agreement that would return their ambassadors and reactivate their diplomatic relations. However, as OE Watch went to press, the reconciliation process once again fell into question as a Turkish court placed a new obstacle in the process, when it indicted four former top Israeli military officers for their role in the 2010 incident.

An analysis of the coverage of the issue in the foreign press suggests that reconciliation is strategically important for both sides for several reasons. As the accompanying passages point out, these reasons are the Syrian crisis, the Iranian nuclear threat, and the potential for Turkey to carry Israeli and Cypriot natural gas resources to European and world markets. One author also claims that Turkish-Israeli reconciliation is important to the U.S. because it might alleviate some of Israel’s security concerns due to the U.S.-Iranian negotiations.

Despite these common national and geopolitical interests, the two sides still have important ideological differences on issues such as Egypt and Palestine, and the relationship also suffers from Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan’s anti-Israeli rhetoric. Therefore, a more realistic analysis would suggest that Turkish-Israeli relations will be a new, unique, and different kind of relationship, but nothing like its golden age in the late



Many claim that a normalized Turkey-Israel relationship is essential for stability in the region.
Source: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=78366>

Source: Sami Kohen, “İsrail ile nasıl bir ilişki? (What kind of relation with Israel?),” Milliyet.com.tr, 10 May 2014, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/israil-ile-nasil-bir-iliski-/dunya/ydetay/1880278/default.htm>

“It is certain that strategic and security factors played a huge role in the improvement of relations. Particularly in light of the events in Syria, which changed the regional balance and created new threats... Another factor is the Obama administration’s constant pressure for the relations to become normalized. And then there is a new economic factor, which we believe was one of the main reasons [for the normalization]. This is the newly discovered rich natural resources in the eastern Mediterranean. The idea that this might be transported to Europe through Turkey, is already creating a lot of excitement and hope and is a golden opportunity for Turkey...”

Source: Serkan Demirtaş, “Turkey-Israel ready for normalization?” Hurriyet Daily News, 14 May 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-israel-ready-for-normalization.aspx?PageID=238&NID=66419&NewsCatID=429>

“Syria, as the common neighbor of the two countries, stands as the biggest issue [for both] Turkey and Israel. Enduring instability in Syria is seen as a major threat for both countries, not only because it risks fragmentation but also because of growing extremist groups in the region... In addition, the discovery of rich natural reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean introduced a new dimension to future bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region. Turkey is seen as the most convenient transit country for the transportation of both Israeli and Cypriot gas and oil reserves...”

(continued)

Continued: Troubles in Turkish-Israeli Reconciliation Efforts

1990s. It will be one with a strong security and trade component, but also one that includes continued anti-Israel rhetoric by Erdoğan.

This reconciliation comes more than one year after Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's apology for the May 2010 incident, during which nine individuals (eight Turkish citizens and one dual U.S.-Turkish citizen) were killed during a raid on a Turkish flotilla, whose stated goal was that it was carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza. Military and diplomatic relations have been frozen since then, with Turkey demanding a formal apology, compensation for the victims' families and the lifting of the Gaza blockade to re-establish relations. Since then Turkey has modified the final condition to easing rather than totally lifting the blockade and providing humanitarian assistance to Gaza, with a special status to be granted to Turkey. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

Source: "Turkey-Israel deal reached, awaits Netanyahu's approval," Times of Israel, 14 May 2014, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/turkey-israel-deal-reached-awaits-netanyahus-approval/>

"Turkey wants to be a regional power and shares, more or less, Israel's views on issues such as the Iranian nuclear threat and the Syrian civil war. Ankara is also keen on extending economic ties with Israel, including the export of natural gas..."

Source: "Rasim Ozan Kütahyalı, "Is Turkish-Israeli Normalization on Track?" Al-Monitor, 16 May 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/05/turkey-israel-relations-thaw.html>

"...If investments can be realized to transport Israeli natural gas to Europe via Turkey, that will surely have a win-win effect in bilateral relations... Europe, which meets 30% of its natural gas needs from Russia, is concerned about diversifying its sources after the Ukraine crisis.... Although the Turkey option [to market the natural gas through Turkey via a pipeline] is more attractive, it won't be possible to achieve cooperation in energy before Israel-Turkey relations are settled..."

Source: Soli Özel, "İsrail - Türkiye: Kaçınılmaz ortaklık mı, bölgesel çekişme mi? (Israel-Turkey: Inevitable partnership or regional competition?)" Al Jazeera Turk, 5 March 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/gorus/israil-turkiye-kacinilmaz-ortaklik-mi-bolgesel-cekisme-mi>

"The Obama administration places a great deal of importance on its rapprochement with Iran and believes that it is important for Israel's relations with Turkey to become normalized in order to alleviate some of Israel's security concerns. Moreover, they place a great deal of importance on this relationship for the future security of the Eastern Mediterranean. Another factor that is viewed as an incentive for the normalization of this relationship is the potential that the natural gas resources located in Israeli waters around Cyprus could be transported to world markets through a pipeline that goes through Turkey."

For background reading on Turkey-Israel relations, please see FMSO monographs:

"Turkey and Israel in a New Middle East," July 2013, <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Turkey-Israel-in-a-New-ME.pdf>

"Changing Trends in Israel-Turkey Security and Military Relations: Their Perspectives," January 2011, <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Changing-Trends-in-Israel-Turkey-Security-Relations.pdf>

“...those in power, even in a tragic situation like this, did not act in a tolerant manner, ...the prime minister showed his autocratic side in this situation, and... [his] angry and abrasive manner led to a new crisis.”

“[This] patriarchal, authoritarian government... must be stopped.”

OE Watch Commentary: Turkey is mourning the death of over 300 coal miners following the 13 May 2014 explosion and fire in a coal mine in Soma, in western Turkey. The government's reaction, as pointed out in the accompanying passages, was once again problematic, authoritarian, harsh, cold, divisive, unapologetic and aloof. The accompanying local perspectives on the government's reaction to the tragedy point to a public that is increasingly frustrated, with Prime Minister Erdoğan in particular.

Following the disaster many in Soma protested the terrible worker safety conditions in the mine, the government's privatization of coal mines, and the prime minister's aloof attitude, including a comment that death is a miner's destiny. Many criticized the government's refusal last month to pass a motion in parliament (introduced by the opposition), calling for an investigation of a series of mine accidents in Soma. Protesters called on the prime minister to resign, and they were once again crushed by water cannons and tear gas. Meanwhile, one of the prime minister's aides was photographed kicking a protester, while the prime minister himself was reported to have slapped a person in a Soma supermarket.

The accompanying passages point to an increasingly frustrated public, who were hoping to see some sign of sympathy and unifying support from their prime minister at such a time of national mourning and pain. As one commentator notes, it is time to stop this patriarchal and authoritarian government. Another commentator points to the fact that Turkey, despite the progress that its leaders frequently claim to have made, still lags well behind the Western world



Rescue efforts following the coal mine tragedy in Soma, Turkey.

Source: <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/948440-somadaki-maden-kazasiyla-ilgili-carpici-iddialar>

Source: Sami Kohen, “Soma sonrası dış imajımız (Our international image post-Soma),” Milliyet.com.tr, 20 May 2014, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/soma-sonrasi-dis-imajimiz/dunya/ydetay/1885030/default.htm>

“...The prime minister's reaction, the fact that his advisor kicked a protester laying on the ground, the use of water cannons and gas to control the protesters, the arrest and detainment of lawyers who came to Soma, have become the main focus of the news and commentaries. Such...commentaries point to the fact that those in power, even in a tragic situation like this, did not act in a tolerant manner, that the prime minister showed his autocratic side in this situation, and that [his] angry and abrasive manner led to a new crisis.”

Source: Mustafa Akyol, “Soma muhasebesi (Analyzing Soma),” Star Gazete, 19 May 2014, <http://haber.stargazete.com/yazar/soma-muhasebesi/haber-884758>

“We need to see this basic fact that Turkey is not yet a ‘developed’ country, but a ‘developing’ country. Particularly on the issues of worker safety and social securities, we are way behind Western democracies. We have taken important steps in the last 10-12 years but we cannot get too proud and stop now. If our coal mines are causing over 300 times the death rates of American coal mines, we still have a long way to go....

Those in power must see that these types of huge disasters cause mass pain, anger and reactions. People...protest. The government's job is to show understanding and sympathy and to calm the people.”

(continued)

Continued: Local Perspectives on Turkey's Coal Mine Tragedy

when it comes to issues like worker safety standards.

Despite the frustration, an important thing to note about the accompanying passages is the muted government criticism and a general hesitancy/fear to point to Erdoğan by name, but rather the use of terms like "those in power." This reflects the increasingly difficult press environment in Turkey for journalists. In fact, government pressure on media and the lack of press freedom have led Freedom House to downgrade Turkey's "partially free" press freedom score, citing the harsh government crackdown on protesters in Istanbul and other cities and increased political pressure on private companies to conform with the ruling party's agenda. End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "Soma'dan sonra (After Soma)," Milliyet.com.tr, 19 May 2014, <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/-soma-sonrasi-/siyaset/ydetay/1884489/default.htm>

"[This] patriarchal, authoritarian government, as evidenced by the prime minister's words and actions in the supermarket in Soma, must be stopped. The government exists not to perpetuate itself or to display its power with its every step...but for the citizens. The government is responsible for that protester, that coal mine worker and that environmentalist. It exists to protect their rights and the laws. Ankara's powerfuls have become so focused on preserving their power that they forgot what they set out to do and why they are in government. Let's remember. You occupy those seats for those people to live a better and safer life. You are not the owner [of those seats], but the tenant. The government is temporary, the people are permanent."



Changing Trends in Israel – Turkey Security and Military Relations: Their Perspectives

This article analyzes the changing trends in the military and security relations between Turkey and Israel. It identifies factors of the operational environment that influence bilateral relations and includes a thorough discussion of each of the factors from a Turkish and Israeli perspective. It argues that relations are a product of the structural changes in the two countries' operational environments.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Changing-Trends-in-Israel-Turkey-Security-Relations.pdf>



“As of April 2014, Turkey’s expenses have surpassed 2.5 billion US dollars. Also, Turkish NGOs have provided some aid, amounting to 500 million US dollars. The international aid that Turkey received is only 183 million US dollars. This is a mounting financial burden for Turkey...”

OE Watch Commentary: A number of Turkish and international think tanks have recently unveiled studies and reports on the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey. The facts and numbers are quite staggering, citing over one million (and counting) refugees fleeing to Turkey and a cost of over \$2.5 billion to the Turkish government. The accompanying passages point out some of the most significant findings of the reports.

Many of the reports cite the camps in Turkey as being better than the camps in other countries in terms of living conditions and health and educational services offered to the Syrians, while noting that there is still a huge gap between what is needed and what is offered. As the first passage points out, given that there is no end in sight for the Syrian crisis, Turkey needs to make long-term plans for the refugees, including planning for their education, health needs, integration into society and the workforce (the latter through vocational services), language training and other programs.

The second passage, from a report by the Turkish think-tank ORSAM (the Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies), discusses that the cost of the refugees to Turkey since 29 April 2011, when Turkey accepted the first Syrian refugees, has been over \$2.5 billion, and this does not include the contribution of Turkish nongovernmental organizations, which have spent some \$500 million. The report goes on to compare this figure with the total international aid that Turkey received for Syrian refugees: \$183 million.

As the passage from the ORSAM report notes, Turkey continues to call on the international community to share the burden with it and the other neighboring



A container camp in a Syrian refugee base in Yayladağı, in southern Turkey, on the Syrian border.
Source: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/06/130607-refugee-crisis-war-migration-turkey-syria-afghanistan-iran-chechnya-gay/>

Source: Soli Özel, “Suriye mülteci sorunu (The Syrian refugee problem),” Haberturk.com.tr, 2 May 2014, <http://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/soli-ozel/944316-suriye-multeci-sorunu>

“According to official figures, there are about 700-750 thousand Syrian refugees in Turkey, but unofficial figures put this number at over a million...In terms of cost and given the increasing number of refugees flowing into Turkey, this is not sustainable. In addition, it is unlikely that many of the Syrian refugees will ever return to their homes. It is necessary to get used a permanent refugee population and start focusing on enabling these people to build a future for themselves in Turkey...Turkey will need to come up with new and quite comprehensive strategies to handle the reality of the situation. It needs to come up with policies addressing the Syrian refugees’ education, social rights, inclusion into the official workforce rather than the black-market...”

Source: “The Situation of Syrian Refugees in the Neighboring Countries: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations,” ORSAM (Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies) Report, April 2014, <http://www.orsam.org.tr/en/showReport.aspx?ID=2638>

“As of April 2014, Turkey’s expenses have surpassed 2.5 billion US dollars. Also, Turkish NGOs have provided some aid, amounting to 500 million US dollars. The international aid that Turkey received is only 183 million US dollars. This is a mounting financial burden for Turkey...”

“The Syria problem is an issue of the international system, and the humanitarian tragedy in this country and forced mass migrations caused by this tragedy pose a threat for peace and security of the whole international system. Within this framework, considering only

(continued)

Continued: Turkey's Syrian Refugee Challenge

countries, claiming that these countries cannot sustain this burden alone. The final passage, from a recent International Crisis Group report, echoes this view.
End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

neighboring countries as the sole addressee of the problem and sort of leaving them alone at this point might further worsen the situation. Therefore, all actors which are a part of the international system need to get more involved in the problem, and they need to provide more support for the neighboring countries which are first-degree addressee to the forced migrations caused by the current crisis in Syria.”

Source: “The Rising Costs of Turkey’s Syrian Quagmire,” International Crisis Group report, 30 April 2014, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/turkey-cyprus/turkey/230-the-rising-costs-of-turkey-s-syrian-quagmire.aspx>

“Turkey needs to ensure that refugees fleeing Syria are able to access safe territory and receive international protection within a legal framework, but it should not have to pay for this alone. Turks have accepted the Syrians on behalf of the wider international community, which has a responsibility to share more of the growing burden. The high costs of building and maintaining shelters mean most newcomers end up outside the camps: the official number of such urban Syrians is around 500,000, but in reality it could be twice that. The influx puts pressure on local infrastructures and creates social tensions. As resources and patience stretch thin and security incidents proliferate, Turkey’s open door policy has its limits.”

The Syrian Crisis from a Neighbor's Perspective: View from Turkey

By Ms. Karen Kaya

This paper examines how the crisis in Syria is spilling over into neighboring countries and the possible implications for Turkey's security. Besides dealing with huge numbers of refugees, the fighting in Syria has exacerbated religious tensions in the region and a host of other security challenges for Turkish officials.

http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20140430_art010.pdf



“Debts to the bank currently total \$31 billion... The country is experiencing a banking crisis.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Islamic Republic of Iran restricts political competition, but factions and widespread animosity exist within the narrow band of acceptable political activity. Broadly speaking, the political spectrum in the Islamic Republic ranges from moderate conservatives—the so-called reformists—to hardline conservatives—called principalists in the Iranian lexicon (because they seek to re-impose the hardline social mores of the early revolutionary period). Every eight years, when an Iranian president steps down because of his two-term limit, there tends to be a great deal of score-settling as the new president and his faction enter office and seek to clean house and hobble his opponents.*

That does not mean that a new administration always targets its predecessors unfairly, just that the transition often provides a window into the egregious corruption which afflicts the Iranian state. So it is with the statement by President Hassan Rouhani’s first vice president that the Islamic Republic has lost approximately \$31 billion in bad bank loans. To put that number in perspective, the

CIA’s World Fact Book estimates that Iran’s total revenue for 2013 was just \$47 billion. The \$31 billion also overshadows previous corruption scandals in Iran, such as in 2011, when forged bank documents enabled an Iranian businessman close to then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and several dozen associates to obtain approximately \$2.6 billion in fraudulent loans from banks and state-owned enterprises, and in 1995, when a court found Morteza Rafiqdoost, the brother of then-Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps chief Mohsen Rafiqdoost, guilty of embezzling \$450 million from Bank Sedarat, an episode which Iranians labeled the crime of the century

*While Iranian officials have recently executed one businessman found guilty of in a \$2.6 billion bank fraud case, the next stage in the current bad bank loan scam will be naming the top 585 bad debtors, most of whom probably have close connections to Ahmadinejad and/or his top aides. That does not mean that prosecution will go forward, however, as Iranian authorities might find it more useful to use the embezzlement charges as a Damocles’ Sword to hold over the head of previous officials so as to keep them and their allies quiet and in line. Nevertheless, whether the Islamic Republic wants to sweep culpability for the missing \$31 billion under the rug or not, it will not be able to avoid the resulting banking crisis about which this incident suggests. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***



Ahmadinejad. Source: <http://www.salon.com>

Source: “Fehrest-e 575 Abr Badehkar-e Banki beh Qaveh Qazi’ayieh Raft,” (“List of 575 Heaviest Bank Debtors Sent to Judiciary,”) Mehr News, 5 May 2014. <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/2285339>

List of 575 Heaviest Bank Debtors Sent to Judiciary

The First Vice President of the Republic [Eshaq Jahangiri] declared that debts to the bank currently total 820 trillion rials [about \$31 billion] and said that the names of 575 people with the most outstanding debt have been sent to the judiciary. According to the Mehr News Agency, citing the information center of the Islamic parliament, on Monday morning [May 5], Eshaq Jahangiri told a meeting of the principalist General Assembly faction that leaders of the society are expected to have a national conversation on societal issues, and he said that rather than targeting of people and individuals, they should focus instead on changing behavior. The first vice president, pointing to the current problems of the people, said, “There are expectations of the people that after elections, hope will be strengthened, but on the other hand, there is no doubt that inflation and unemployment are their main concerns. He said that the country is experiencing a banking crisis, and he warned, “Now the total outstanding debt has reached 820 trillion rials, and in this regard, the government first tried to verify it, and in this demanding environment, the guilty people have had an impact on the economic situation.

“The aging population of the country is...a danger.”

OE Watch Commentary: *If demography is destiny, then the Islamic Republic's future is far from certain. If the editorial in Jomhuri-ye Islami, a broadsheet closely associated with Iran's hardline factions and Intelligence Ministry, is to be believed, then Iranians appear to be ignoring Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's calls for them to have more babies (See: “Khamenei Speaks on Demography,” Operational Environment Watch, December 2013). The editorial goes further, however, in outlining regime concerns about the declining birth rate: after a brief discussion of how an aging population affects the economy, it addresses sensitive issues relating to Iran's ethnic and sectarian diversity. While the ethnic Persian population has fallen below replacement rate, the excerpted article warns of the increasing proportion of “sectarian minorities.” This is an allusion not to the small Jewish, Baha'i, or Zoroastrian populations inside Iran, or even the slightly larger Christian population, but rather to the growing Sunni Muslim population along Iran's periphery, especially in Iranian Kurdistan and Baluchistan. One of the ironies of the Islamic Republic is that there is greater tolerance toward many non-Muslim minorities (Baha'is are an exception) than there is toward Sunnis.*

The article also laments the growing trend toward later marriage, with many men not marrying until their 30s and women until their 20s. This is a sharp contrast to decades past, when both men and women would marry in their teens. Late marriage, combined with a high divorce rate, suggests that it will take more than simply the Supreme Leader's words, and instead some serious attention to economic and social factors undercutting family life if Iran hopes to speed its population growth.

*Demography inside Iran may be the last thing on international diplomats' minds as they address issues such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, sanctions, and trade, but the internal Iranian discussion suggests that senior officials inside Iran expect the demographic debate and subsequent internal policy proscriptions to have as great if not greater impact on the future shape of the Islamic Republic. Unfortunately for Iran, talking about changing culture is a lot easier than actually effecting that change. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

Source: “Enghalabigeri dar ‘Arseh Moderiyat-e Kalan-e Kashvar,” (“Building Culture, the Way to Counter the Population Decrease”) Jomhuri-ye Islami, 14 May 2014. http://www.jomhourieslami.com/1393/13930224/13930224_01_jomhuri_islami_sar_magaleh_0001.html

The Way to Counter the Population Decrease

The expressions of concern made these days about the alarming changes in the population composition of the country, especially regarding the negative rate of growth of the population, are very important. Unfortunately, in the course of the 1370s [1990s], 1380s [2001-2011], and 1390s [2011-today], the policy of population control, which was a totally wrong policy, was implemented along with extensive campaigning, legal and political backing, and the resources of the country; and that which can be seen today is the legacy of that wrong policy. The statistics published today [showing a growth rate hovering around one percent] are truly shocking; and if we do not take calculated steps, a great threat is on the way [since the population of “sectarian minorities” has increased by about 50 percent in the last three decades].

Now, more than anything else, the danger regarding the aging population of the country is mentioned, which is of course true, in the same way that the negative rate of growth is also a danger. Other greater dangers, however, also exist regarding the countering of which decisions must be made. These dangers consist of the influence of “the culture of fewer children” on the psyche and lives of the people, and another is related to the major changes that have occurred in the population balance in the interest of religious minorities and sectarian minorities, which are expanding.

...The National Registration Organization has stated in the continuation of his report that in 1392 [21 March 2013-20 March 2014], the level of divorces increased by two-thirds compared to the previous year. In addition, the marriage age of 86 percent of men occurred between the ages of 20 and 34, and of 85 percent of women, between the ages of 18 and 29. These delays certainly affect the decrease in population, but the worrisome point is that regarding the same people as well, because they are under the influence of the wrong culture of “fewer children, better life,” the decrease in births continues in another way.

In the past two years, after the grand leader of the Revolution announced that the policy of population growth was wrong, certain steps have been taken to turn to the correct course about the population policy of the country, and certain efforts are being made. Still, however, no essential changes can be observed in the dangerous trend that has been created as the result of the wrong policy of population control in the society.

“The police in Yazd...did not stop the vigilantes.”

OE Watch Commentary: State control of culture is an obsession of the Islamic Republic. The Islamic Revolution, after all, was not simply about a change in the political system, but also focused on rebuilding the religious and moral basis of Iranian culture. Officials up to and including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei often speak of cleansing Iranian culture of non-Islamic inspiration, preventing the infiltration of Western influence into society, and purging the school curriculum of Western values, literature, and even sciences.

At the same time, Iran has a rich poetic, musical, and cultural tradition which the Iranian government has sought to encourage as an alternative to the Western music, film, and literature that many young Iranians find alluring. It is in this context that the city of Yazd sponsored a concert with prominent traditional Iranian singer Vahid Taj (whose work can be seen, here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyWMIM8_wAU). As Taj took the stage, however, several dozen vigilantes rushed it to shut down the concert, alleging the Taj was promoting sedition, no matter that Taj was fully vetted and the concert state-sanctioned. Yazd officials are upset that police who were guarding the concert did nothing to stop the vigilantes.

This type of vigilante action has long precedent in Iran. During the administration of Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), vigilantes associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and paramilitary Basij frequently attacked students, cultural events, and even foreigners in order to intimidate reformers and constrain what they perceived as growing liberalism. In almost every case, the police stood aside as the vigilantes acted, and the judiciary likewise refused to rule against the thugs, even when students or others they attacked died of their wounds. This has reinforced the perception in Iran that vigilante groups have high-level protection and are acting with the implicit permission of the Supreme Leader, who may feel that extra-legal means are necessary to control pro-reformist sentiment.

What does this mean today for Rouhani? Just as vigilantes constrained reformist sentiment and ultimately prevented Khatami from enacting his reformist platform during the latter three-quarters of his presidency, the attack on the conference in Yazd signals to Iranians that whatever hopes they had that Rouhani might bring change will likely remain unfulfilled, with internal violence increasing the harder Rouhani or his followers push. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Policeman on Street - Yazd - Central Iran.
Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

Source: “Anha-he keh beh Salon-e Konsert Hojum Baradand, Zad Nizamand” (“Those Who Attacked the Concert Hall Are against the Regime,”) Asr-i Iran, 14 May 2014.
<http://goo.gl/1mSZ97>

Those Who Attacked the Concert Hall Are against the Regime

Our community is young, and the young need to have a good time that is also safe for them. If we do not provide a safe environment, then the young people will turn to illegal music. We asked the police in Yazd to treat the matter seriously, but they did not stop the vigilantes.

The music director said that the influx of rogue individuals into the Yazd concert was unfortunate and said, “This movement was not approved by anyone and it is not among the pillars of the Islamic Republic of Iran.” In an interview with the Islamic Students News Agency, Pirouz Arjomand said, “The concert of Vahid Taj with the group ‘Messiah’ was approved by the general administration of culture and Islamic guidance, and it was decided that it would be held in Yazd, and everyone in the Department of Music approved.” He continued, “But that night, a number of rogues came and they were protestors to this performance by Vahid Taj, and the reason they acted was because they had false information about this artist, and so they carried out this action...and overall, it was far from their cultural environment.

Arjomand continued, “Vahid Taj is a great young artist with a record of being both bright and extremely moral. The song that these people protested, ‘You Get Together,’ for which Mr. Sighar Harandi won a prize in 2009. This piece is about remembering the early participants in the revolution, and it didn’t have anything to do with other events [in 2009].

“... there is much turbulence in the relationship with Tel Aviv these days ...”

OE Watch Commentary: Clashes between residents and security forces are nothing new in the politically and economically marginalized Jordanian city of Ma'an (population around 50,000). They have occurred nearly a dozen times in the past three years, not to mention in 1989, 1996, 1998 and 2002, among others. In addition to clashes and riots, the city is home to active civil society groups that regularly organize marches and protests against government policies. While the Jordanian state seems to understand that the recurrence of public dissent will not go away without political reform and economic development, it nonetheless continues to apply a security-first policy in Ma'an. This policy works in the short term, but exacerbates grievances in the long run, as the first accompanying excerpt notes.

In early April 2014 a variety of local civil society groups took to the streets of Ma'an, calling on the central government to do something about rising prices, high unemployment, and endemic corruption, among others. Protesters also called for the release of residents detained without charge over the past years, most notably from the riots that began on the campus of the local Al Hussein bin Talal University last year. On 21 April, amidst a security operation to detain a wanted man, a young bystander was killed by Jordanian security. In what has become a familiar chain of events, riots and clashes with security forces ensued; after several days, security forces were able to restore order.

The latest round of unrest in Ma'an occurred at a time of tension in Jordan's relations with Israel. The latest round of popular ire toward Israel began after Israeli soldiers shot and killed Raed Zeiter, a Jordanian judge, on 10 March. Some of the protests in Ma'an in early April questioned the Jordanian government's response to Zeiter's killing and called for a reconsideration of relations with Israel. In mid-April clashes broke out on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem between Israeli forces and Muslim worshippers. The Jordanian government, theoretically the administrator of these Muslim holy sites, publicly blamed Israel for the clashes.



Kamel abu Jaber
Source: <http://goo.gl/x2mLhN>

Source: Areej Abuqudairi. "Jordan reels from week of violence in Ma'an," 28 April 2014. Al-Jazeera (English). <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/04/jordan-reels-from-week-violence-Ma'an-20144281256437277.html>

Article #1:

Al-Emam is the ninth person to be killed by Jordanian security forces since last year in Ma'an, al-Khattab alleged. "They adopted [a] cowboy-style state with us," activist and lawyer Maher Kuraishan told Al Jazeera. "These people are innocent until they plead guilty. They must [turn them over] to judiciary system and not kill them."

Source: Kamel S. Abu Jaber. "The big Zionist lie and the task ahead," 27 April 2014. Jordan Times. <http://jordantimes.com/the-big-zionist-lie-and-the-task-ahead>

Article #2:

American Secretary of State John Kerry has been travelling to the region for some time now in an effort to bring about peace between Palestinians and Israelis. So far, his efforts have been shattered against the rock of Israeli resistance. What will get Israel to agree to a settlement is not going to be good sentiments or feelings, wishes or intentions. What is needed is a counterforce, be it military, political, economic or the oil weapon... An Arabic proverb says: "The rope of lies is short." Hopefully that will prove to be true in the case of Zionism, too, though for that to happen, we need to intensify our efforts in that direction.

(continued)

Continued: Jordan: Ma'an between Israel and the ISIS Crescent

The second accompanying article, published in the English-language Jordan Times by former Jordanian Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, is entitled, "The Big Zionist Lie and the Task Ahead." In it the author accuses "the rock of Israeli resistance" for the failure of American-led attempts to revive the peace process. The article strikes a critical and defiant tone toward Israel, arguing that, rather than "good sentiments or feelings," what is needed for Israel to agree to a peace settlement is "a counterforce, be it military, political, economic or the oil weapon."

Around this same time (the second half of April) concerns of the threat of jihadism to Jordan gained traction in the international media. According to the third accompanying article, written by the Jordan Bureau chief of al-Quds al-Arabi, the sudden emphasis on the terrorist threat to Jordan should be understood in the context of tensions with Israel. The author argues that the issue of jihadism in Jordan came to the fore shortly after the diplomatic quarrel between Jordan and Israel, following the release of a report on the issue and subsequent leaks emanating from Israel. As a consequence, he explains, relations between Amman and Tel Aviv should be kept in mind when assessing the so-called "ISIS crescent" which allegedly stretches from the Sinai to Syria and al-Anbar via the Jordanian towns of Aqaba and Ma'an.

The first manifestation of the new jihadi threat facing Jordan came in the form of three videos uploaded to YouTube, in which alleged Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) members took advantage of the events in Ma'an to threaten the Jordanian government. One of the videos carried audio of a pledge of allegiance to ISIS on behalf of the "Ma'an Martyrs Battalion." A second showed a Jordanian jihadi burning his passport and threatening the government. A third showed three self-identified ISIS jihadis threatening Jordan and sending a message to "our people in Ma'an." An anonymous Jordanian government source, cited in the third accompanying article, was dismissive, noting that "Jordan's security forces are able to deny any infiltration by these groups and respond directly." For his part Mohammed Shalabi ("Abu Sayyaf"), a prominent Salafi-jihadi leader in Ma'an, dismissed the idea that the videos came from ISIS leadership, instead surmising that individuals within the organization acting independently, foreign intelligence agencies, or groups seeking to preemptively attack Jordan's Salafists were behind the videos. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

مناكفات تحولت إلى 'تسريبات' عدائية ضد الأردن وسيناريو إسرائيلي 'تحريضي' يربط أحداث معان بـ 'جهاديين' تسللوا من سيناء عبر العقبة

Bassam Badarin. "Quarrels become 'leaks' against Jordan and Israel's 'instigation' scenario links events in Ma'an to jihadis coming from Sinai via Aqaba," 5 May 2014. Al-Quds al-Arabi. <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=164613>

Article #3:

According to a prominent minister in the Jordanian government who spoke to al-Quds al-Arabi Israeli concerns about the situation in Jordan have become a common refrain after Jordan refused, behind the scenes, to offer important concessions during Kerry's communications, as well as Amman's insistence on strongly standing behind Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas... there is much turbulence in the relationship with Tel Aviv these days.

Source:

بالفيديو... "داعش" تتوعد الأردن.. وعمان لا نهتم بتهديدات الإرهابيين

"ISIS threatens Jordan... Amman not interested in terrorist threats," 5 May 2014. al-Yaum al-Sabaa (via Turkey's Andalou Press Agency). <http://www1.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=1648808>

Article #4:

Abu Siyyaf added that "these videos may have been fabricated by security agencies, they may have been produced by a specific group in preparation for a pre-emptive strike against Islamic groups, or they may have been broadcast by fighters acting individually and without consulting the organization's leadership."



Screenshot from video of "Message to our people in Ma'an":
Source: <http://goo.gl/iHxB5m>

Egypt's New Rapid Deployment Force

1 May 2014

“... to conduct all types of missions and deal with conventional and unconventional threats in theaters both in and outside of the country ...”

OE Watch Commentary: On 25 March 2014 Egyptian Field Marshal Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi unveiled to military leaders and local media the country's first-ever rapid deployment force (RDF). The presentation of this new force came at a politically sensitive time – the following day al-Sisi officially resigned as head of the military in order to pursue the presidency. As a result, some of his critics view the new force as a political rather than a military instrument. Although the timing of the ceremony may have been political, the creation of the force was, in fact, guided by a new strategic focus and may represent a preliminary step toward transforming the Egyptian military from a large conventional force focused on defending against Israel to one capable of rapid deployment to confront unconventional threats in a variety of theaters.

As noted in the first accompanying excerpt, taken from the Egyptian Armed Forces Facebook page, Egypt's RDF is not an entirely new creation, but rather a task force assembled from a variety of existing units. Its troops are backed by light armored vehicles and have a dedicated air fleet and helicopters for transport (though no large transport aircraft). Its airborne capabilities allow it to operate both inside and outside Egypt's borders, a fact that has raised many eyebrows, including those of prominent Egyptian columnist Fahmi Huwaidi, as illustrated by the second accompanying excerpt.

The third accompanying excerpt comes from the Egyptian daily al-Wafd and is written by retired Major General Hossam Sowilam. The article provides a good summary of the perceived threats that drive current Egyptian military strategy and which are largely centered on a feverish fear of anything associated with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). This threat is felt throughout Egyptian territory and also across Egypt's borders with Libya, Sudan and Gaza. Qatar is seen as a key financier and instigator of the threat. While the author does not dismiss broader strategic challenges



Former head of the Egyptian military Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi.
Source: Egyptian Armed Forces Facebook page photostream: https://www.facebook.com/Egyptian.Armed.Forces.l/photos_stream

Source: Egyptian Armed Forces Facebook page. 25 March 2014. <http://goo.gl/YK22hH>

Article #1:

.... This allows them to deploy quickly to conduct all types of missions and deal with conventional and unconventional threats in theaters both in and outside of the country... the most capable elements come from mechanized and armored infantry, air defense, artillery, and anti-tank units. There are also surveillance units, military police, several fighting aircraft and special forces capable of air deployment and furnished with the most modern weapons and equipment...

Source:

ملاحظات على بيان السيسي
Fahmi Huweidi. "Observations on al-Sisi's announcement," 31 March, al-Shurouk (Egypt). <http://www.shorouknews.com/columns/view.aspx?cdate=31032014&id=f5bee6f9-ae02-4dd8-acad-0cde90d64ec3> (translation via: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/africa/10631-understanding-al-sisis-statement>)

Article #2:

The idea of Egypt's role in combating terrorism in the region was ruled out by Egypt early on, when it was proposed after Sadat signed the peace treaty with Israel in 1979, as it was said at the time that after the war against Israel ended, Washington proposed that Egypt focus its military plans on combating terrorism in "the region".

It is worth noting that during that same year, immediately after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, a rapid deployment force was formed to secure the Gulf oil and the Indian Ocean. Finally, I noticed that the announcement of the formation of the Egyptian rapid deployment force was made a month after the joint military exercises with the Emirates were held for the first time in the history of the Egyptian military and I am not sure if there is any relationship between the military exercises that took place in late February and the formation of the aforementioned force in late March, but it is worth giving attention to and observing.

(continued)

Continued: Egypt's New Rapid Deployment Force

from Iran (as a threat to regional order) and Ethiopia (as a threat to Egypt's water security), he and others see the RDF as primarily focused on MB-linked threats.

Analysts see the Sinai and Libya as the two most likely destinations for Egypt's new RDF. The fourth accompanying article, an editorial from the English-language edition of the influential al-Ahram newspaper, highlights the importance that Libya is given in current Egyptian strategic thinking.

With the rise of Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, a new generation of military leadership in Egypt has taken control of the country's armed forces. The older generation, including former Defense Minister Mohammed al-Tantawi, was averse to any changes in Egyptian military doctrine away from conventional deterrence of Israel. The creation of the RDF signals a move toward enhancing Egypt's offensive asymmetric and counterinsurgency capabilities both within and beyond the country's borders. It may well be the first step in a politically delicate transformation of the Egyptian military.
End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)

Source:

مغزى تشكيل وحدة "الإنقاذ والتدخل السريع"
Hossam Sowilam. "The significance of the formation of the Rapid Deployment Force," 3 April 2014. Al-Wafd. <http://goo.gl/6i9DdE>

Article #3:

What is not in doubt is that the timing of the announcement of the formation of the rapid deployment force was decided after the decision had been made to establish, build and train the force. This decision is fundamentally linked to the dangerous and numerous security threats faced by Egypt for the first time in its modern history...

Source: Editorial. "Our war on terror," 1 May 2014. Al-Ahram Weekly (English). <http://weekly.ahram.org/News/6053/21/Editorial.aspx>

Article #4:

Now that the Egyptian army and police are winning the war on terror in Sinai, those who wish ill for this country are contemplating opening a new front. It is a fact that members of Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups have set up training camps in Libya, with the blessing and cooperation of the Muslim Brotherhood international outfit.



Former head of the Egyptian military Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi at the presentation of Egypt's rapid deployment force.
Source: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=681594668566072&set=pb.151949418197269.-2207520000.1400612055.&type=3&src=https%3A%2F%2Fcontent-a-iad.xx.fbcdn.net%2Fphotos-ash3%2Ft1.0-9%2F1926843_681594668566072_740985486_n.jpg&size=960%2C719

“... Some jihadis express their fears that al-Nusra will increasingly act alone ...”

OE Watch Commentary: In early January 2014 Jabhat al-Nusra fighters in Syria's northern provinces of Aleppo and Idlib joined a rebel offensive against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which resulted in ISIS retreating to areas east of Aleppo city. ISIS decried the affair as a Western-backed conspiracy, disparagingly calling its rebel opponents “awakenings” in reference to the US-sponsored tribal militias formed in Iraq's al-Anbar Province in the mid-2000s to counter ISIS's predecessor movement. The offensive against ISIS was not unanimously embraced within the ranks of Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), as some feared that once ISIS had been neutralized they would be next. This premonition seems to be materializing in the southern provinces of Daraa and Quneitra, near Syria's border with both Israel and Jordan.

The first accompanying article is taken from the Syrian opposition news website tahrirsouri.com. The article explains a new effort by foreign backers to unify the ranks of “moderate rebels” before providing them with advanced weaponry to take on both the regime and ISIS, starting with the much-discussed TOW missiles that recently appeared in the hands of several Syrian rebel groups. The new effort to arm vetted rebels, the article argues, is a starting point for understanding recent tensions in southern Syria between JN and the Supreme Military Council (SMC), another name for what many still refer to as the Free Syrian Army.

On 2 May a video was posted on YouTube in which Colonel Ahmed al-Naama (also spelled al-Nehmeh, al-Ni'mah, al-Na'meh, etc.), the Jordan-based head of Daraa's SMC, announced the formation of the “Southern Syria Revolutionaries Front.” Al-Naama explicitly flaunted his liberal credentials, emphasizing that this new formation rejects extremism and believes in “democracy, civilian rule and the ballot box.” A few hours later he and several of the new formation's high-level leaders were detained at a JN checkpoint following a brief firefight that left one JN fighter dead. JN-linked social media accounts explained that al-Naama was a wanted man and would be taken before the local Shari'a Council. A few days later, he appeared in a video with a swollen left eye and confessed to conspiring with foreign powers (in May 2013) against rebel fighters trying to hold the strategic town of Khirbat Ghazala, along the Amman-Damascus highway. Al-Nusra claimed



Ahmed al-Naama announcing formation of Southern Syria Revolutionaries Front
Source: YouTube screenshot

Source:

جبهة ثوار جنوب سوريا .. لماذا الآن؟
“Southern Syria Revolutionaries Front... Why now?” 6 May 2014, tahrirsouri.com.
<http://goo.gl/v963aZ>

Article #1:

A number of activists in Daraa see al-Naama's new formation as part of a coordinated effort with Jordanian and American intelligence to fight Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic brigades more generally in southern Syria... It is impossible to confirm this other than by looking at America's arming of several opposition battalions in northern Syria... This may explain Jabhat al-Nusra's pre-emptive move in kidnapping Col. al-Naama...

Source:

انقلاب عسكري لـ«جبهة النصرة» في درعا
Abdallah Suleiman Ali. “Military Coup by Jabhat al-Nusra in Daraa,” 5 May 2014, [al-Safir](http://www.assafir.com/Article/5/349129). <http://www.assafir.com/Article/5/349129>

Article #2:

Despite the numerous media reports on the links between al-Nusra and the Military Council with Jordanian intelligence, the Jordanians aimed to exploit the differences between these two groups it supported and the contradictions between them, preventing any coordination or agreement that might have allowed them to both emerge from its mantle... Reports indicate that al-Nusra possesses weapons and ammunition obtained from Syrian depots in eastern Quneitra in the latest battles, which are enough to launch a destructive war to control the city of Daraa and expel the Free Syrian Army from there. Jordanian intelligence considers this a red line... Some jihadis express their fears that al-Nusra will increasingly act alone without consulting other factions, pointing to the possibility that a trap is being set for al-Nusra as happened with ISIS before.

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Continued: Jabhat al-Nusra at a Crossroads

to have obtained a full confession from al-Naama, including details on how tens of millions of dollars destined for injured rebels were embezzled by opposition leader Ahmed al-Jarba.

The reaction to JN's move was mixed, for although al-Naama is unpopular in Daraa, many feared JN had crossed a line in kidnapping him and risked replicating the type of behavior ISIS had become infamous for in areas under its control. The past few months have not been kind to JN, as it continues to be squeezed by ISIS in Deir Ezzour Province after having been defeated by the Syrian Army and its allies in the Qalamoun Mountains near Damascus. JN's links to foreign intelligence agencies have likely tarnished its jihadi credentials. The second accompanying article argues that Jordan has now decided to cut ties with JN in Daraa.

JN in Daraa and in Syria as a whole is at a crossroads and may be forced to choose between what we might call the hard and soft versions of Salafi-jihadism in Syria. In Daraa, those within JN opting for defiance would find a natural ally in ISIS, as JN fighters in some Damascus suburbs have done. Those seeking compromise, on the other hand, would find a willing ally in the Islamic Front (IF), as JN fighters in northern Syria have. Either way, JN may well be on the verge of a second round of fragmentation (the first was in April 2013, with the founding of ISIS). For now, JN's Daraa branch appears to be biding its time, holding Ahmed al-Naama as a bargaining chip and waiting for offers from both sides.

Fears that JN may finally allow ISIS to make inroads in Daraa are real. Perhaps for this reason some have begun calling for a merger between JN and the IF, as shown in the third accompanying article. The parameters for a new "soft jihadi" alliance seem fairly clear: the IF recently unveiled its so-called "Revolutionary Covenant," an 11-point document signed by it and several other Islamic fighting groups, parts of which are excerpted in the fourth accompanying article. Among other things, the covenant calls for staying away from fundamentalism and radicalism, building a state of law, freedom and justice, preserving Syrian territorial integrity, committing to a respect for human rights and pluralism, and welcoming the opportunity to communicate and cooperate with regional and international forces. JN did not sign it, instead releasing a lengthy statement explaining its objections to the covenant. Presumably, a pen is still waiting for them; so is ISIS.

End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)



Al-naama

Source: https://twitter.com/IslamicFront_En/status/467651278605414401

Source:

المحيسني يدعو إلى إندماج «النصرة» مع «الجمبهة الإسلامية»
Said Jawdat. "Al-Mohaisany calls for al-Nusra and the Islamic Front to merge," 18 May 2014. All4syria.info. <http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/147734>

Article #3:

Saudi shaykh Abdullah Mohammed al-Mohaisany called on the Islamic Front in Syria and Jabhat al-Nusra to join under a single banner... Many welcomed this initiative and some asked him to try to make it happen, while others wondered why "al-Mohaisany changed his tune (...) and whether he changed his ideology after losing faith in and leaving ISIS."

Source: Islamic Front, English-language Twitter feed. 17 May 2014. https://twitter.com/IslamicFront_En/status/467651278605414401

Article #4:

"The Syrian revolution is a revolution based on morals and values with the objective of achieving freedom, justice and security (for) the entire Syrian society, with its diverse multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian social fabric."

“With decades of fighting behind them, both know that it’s far easier to unleash the dogs of war than it is to restrain them.”

OE Watch Commentary: *It is a ceasefire that never ceased the firing. In South Sudan, despite an agreement to lay down arms between President Salva Kiir and his former Deputy President-turned-rebel-leader Rick Machar, fighting between the followers of these two men continues. Declaring an end to hostilities is apparently easier than actually implementing it, especially when there is a lack of command, control, and communications (C3) on both sides.*

Before looking at why the ceasefire has so far failed, some background information on South Sudan is necessary. The world’s newest nation did not take long to devolve into civil war; indeed, there had been ethnic tensions, including violence, among the various ethnic groups, especially the Dinka and the Nuer, even before national independence. The rift follows into politics - Kiir is Dinka and Machar is Nuer - such that when Kiir accused Machar of trying to stage a coup and Machar fled, the divide in the country fell mainly along ethnic lines, with subsequent retaliatory massacres between the two main groups set into motion.

There was great hope that with the signing of the peace agreement the Dinka and Nuer could put their differences aside and start working to overcome the immense problems facing the country. Unfortunately, the fighting continues. Even if the deal was negotiated in good faith, the lack of C3 makes it extremely difficult to implement. To begin with, as the accompanying article states “...it is far from clear that either leader has the authority to make the fighting stop.”

Both sides also lack forces that are well coordinated among the various elements, leaving Kiir and Machar uncertain if their orders will always be followed. Machar, in particular, is dependent on a non-cohesive group of militias, called the White Army (reportedly because they smear light colored ash on their faces as protection against insect bites, though other explanations have also been offered), but to call this “collection of well-armed, opportunists” an army is a



While forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and his former Deputy President-turned-rebel-leader, Rick Machar, battle in South Sudan, civilian villages in the countryside are caught in the crossfire.

Source: <http://en.alalam.ir/news/1555896>

Source: Simon Allison, “South Sudan: Whose Ceasefire Is It Anyway?” Daily Maverick (South Africa), 14 May 2014, <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-05-14-south-sudan-whose-ceasefire-is-it-anyway/#.U3jCBa9OVv4>

A power struggle within the ruling party has exploded into a vicious civil war, characterized by ethnic violence.

President Salva Kiir and former Deputy President-turned-rebel-leader Riek Machar managed to agree to a ceasefire. [They] signed the document which was supposed to come into effect on Saturday.

Saturday came and went. The fighting continued. Sunday came, and Monday, and Tuesday, and still the warring fighters traded bullets and attacks.

... it is far from clear that either leader has the authority to make the fighting stop.

... even if Riek Machar was able to give orders, there is no guarantee that those orders would be followed by the ragtag bunch of militiamen he has assembled under his banner. Machar calls his fighters the White Army, but this is a misnomer; they are not a single, cohesive force, but rather a collection of well-armed opportunists.

“...nor is Riek a true leader of the forces in the field, increasingly divided along ethnic lines and divided by a vast geography with almost no communications or transport infrastructure...his control of the White Army (Nuer youth militia) is highly doubtful.”

President Kiir, despite enjoying the trappings of state, has a similar problem. He’s been mobilizing a few militias of his own, particularly among the Dinka youth

As noted in Africa Confidential, these untrained youth, hard to control at the best of

(continued)

Continued: South Sudan: Why a Ceasefire Without C3 Was Doomed to Fail

significant stretch. Kiir also has issues with his forces. While he has control of the army - though many left to fight for Machar - he also has numerous Dinka militias with varying degrees of oversight. Often composed of untrained youth, many are anxious to exact revenge for a massacre in 1991, when the Nuer killed over 2,000 Dinka, making them difficult, and at times impossible to control.

This poor command and control is set against a backdrop of a nation lacking many of the basic pieces of infrastructure, such as cell towers in rural areas, where many of the rebels are located, that enable rapid communications to take place throughout the country. As for the military, it has radios, but many of them do not work. Thus, orders and information from both sides are often in short supply. In such an environment rumors can become the intelligence on which actions are based.

*There are no guarantees that even with excellent C3 capabilities the fighting would permanently stop in South Sudan; longstanding animosities are difficult to overcome, especially when so much blood has been shed. However, the lack of basic C3 capabilities makes even attempts at reconciliation that much more difficult. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

times, have an extra motivation to fight against Machar, particularly in the trouble spots around Bor.

Both leaders have deliberately exploited insecurities and historical enmity to further their short term political aims, with little regard for consequences. And despite their protestations to the contrary, neither will be surprised at their inability to reign in the violence. With decades of fighting behind them, both know that it's far easier to unleash the dogs of war than it is to restrain them.

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

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

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

<http://fms0.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Africa's-Brain-Drain.pdf>



“Since the Westgate shopping mall attacks, many Kenyans now live in fear. But the government’s anti-terror crackdown has angered many Muslims, some of whom have flocked to al-Shabaab.”

OE Watch Commentary: Kenya is at war with al-Shabaab. Initially many of its military actions against the jihadist group were on Somali territory, with the Kenyan army only invading its northern neighbor after kidnappings by al-Shabaab on Kenyan soil. Al-Shabaab, in turn, has increasingly brought the war to Kenya, with numerous attacks against soft targets. Kenya has responded with what many observers say is heavy-handedness, which, as the accompanying article states, “has angered many Muslims, some of whom have flocked to al-Shabaab.”

This spiraling cycle of violence between al-Shabaab and Kenya is actually a relatively new phenomenon. Prior to 2011, even with al-Shabaab entrenched in southern and central Somalia, Kenya and the terrorist organization had what could be described as an unwritten mutual understanding, “Don’t touch me, I won’t touch you.” Al-Shabaab’s kidnappings in Kenya changed all that.

Religious fanaticism aside, Al-Shabaab is militarily no match for the Kenyan forces in Somalia. However, by bringing the fight to Kenya - with a grenade attack here, a bombing there, and occasionally a spectacular assault, such as occurred at the Westgate Mall - the terrorist organization is hoping to persuade Kenyans that the price for their military adventure in Somalia is too high to pay. There are some signs that they are succeeding, including a recent editorial in a Kenyan newspaper advocating withdrawal.

While some Kenyan op-ed pages may be swayed, the Kenyan government is not, and instead is pursuing a very aggressive counterterrorism strategy. Human rights groups have decried the government for going too far, including “arbitrary arrests and detentions, extortion, and other abuses against Somalis” who are refugees in Kenya, as well as rounding up and deporting them back to Somalia, a country still in the throes of war. There are also the assassinations against high-profile Muslim clerics, including Sheikh Abubakar Sharif, known as Makaburi, who had defended al-Shabaab’s attacks on Kenyans. No one is claiming responsibility, but as Kenyan police have issued shoot-to-kill orders for terrorism suspects, government forces are a prime suspect for this extrajudicial execution.

This fighting between the Kenyan forces and al-Shabaab, which not only kills people and destroys property, but also scares away foreigners from its heavily tourism-dependent economy, is something Kenya had wanted to avoid. Remember, both sides prior to 2011 were accepting of the status quo... leave each other alone. However, with increasing terrorist attacks, including two explosions that killed at least ten people in Nairobi the day this commentary was written, the Kenyan government can be expected to continue to react strongly - very strongly - even if it does risk driving some frightened people into the arms of al-Shabaab. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



Al-Shabaab’s reign of terror in Kenya, including this bomb attack in Nairobi, sparked a forceful - some say to the point of being counterproductive - response by the security forces. Source: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/03/nairobi-rocked-deadly-bomb-blasts-2014331233630857763.html>

Source: Maalik Eng, “After Westgate, Kenya goes to war against al-Shabaab,” Shabelle News Media, 12 May 2014, <http://shabelle.net/?p=21079>

Grenade attacks and other bombings have become commonplace since the Kenyan army invaded Somalia in 2011. Only last week both Nairobi and Mombasa were struck.

In response to the attacks, thousands of Somalis in Kenya have been rounded up, imprisoned and some deported to Mogadishu. In response, human rights groups have urged a stop to the crackdown: “Kenyan police and other security agencies should stop arbitrary arrests and detentions, extortion, and other abuses against Somalis”.

In the coastal region, mostly populated by Muslims, law enforcement agencies are accused of intimidation, arrest and extrajudicial killings.

However, the on-going battle looks like a scenario which an al-Shabaab commander described to me in 2010. He was talking about “how to win a war”. Back then, the Islamist fighters were in control of most of southern and central Somalia. Kenya and al-Shabab had a mutual understanding: “Don’t touch me, I won’t touch you.”

Please Ignore Those Crimes Against Humanity: African Leaders Above the Law

16 May 2014

“Attempts to secure immunity from prosecution for African government leaders has been criticized as a potentially “detrimental” move that would impact on the rule of law and justice on the continent.”

OE Watch Commentary: *There look to be no more Nurembergs, or at least none involving African leaders accused of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. According to the accompanying article, African justice ministers and attorneys general recently met in Ethiopia, where they drafted a protocol to expand the jurisdiction over these crimes by the African Court on Justice and Human Rights. However, while such an action may sound appealing, another aspect of the protocol falls far short of justice—a proposed blanket immunity absolving sitting African leaders for their part in perpetrating these heinous crimes.*

It is not just the African Court on Justice and Human Rights in the sights of African leaders looking to escape prosecution or even the threat of prosecution for their actions. The International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands, has been a target of criticism by some Africans in high places for years. The main accusation is that the ICC is a tool of Western imperialism, punishing weak African nations but not going after rich and powerful non-African ones. They point to the fact that although there are a few preliminary investigations in non-African nations, of the eight cases so far actually brought or being brought before the court, all involve African nations.

*To be clear, not all of the ICC’s prosecutions are against political leaders; legal action against African terrorists such as Joseph Kony, head of the Lord’s Resistance Army, is also being pursued. Nor is everyone in Africa opposed to the ICC; many regard it as a judicial opportunity for nations unwilling or unable to prosecute certain individuals. Still, with strong leaders such as Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, accused by the ICC of crimes, including genocide, against the people of Darfur, and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, accused of fomenting ethnic violence prior to his becoming president, there are powerful forces in Africa looking to ignore past crimes, and perhaps even present and future ones. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***



Darfur. Will African leaders grant themselves immunity for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity?
Source: <http://ilblogdibarbara.ilcannocchiale.it/?TAG=Darfur>

Source: Alex Bell, “Africa Fights for Immunity for Government Leaders,” SW Radio Africa: The Independent Voice of Zimbabwe (London), 16 May 2014, <http://www.swradioafrica.com/2014/05/16/africa-fights-for-immunity-for-government-leaders/>

Attempts to secure immunity from prosecution for African government leaders has been criticized as a potentially “detrimental” move that would impact on the rule of law and justice on the continent.

Jemima Njeri, a senior researcher in the International Crime in Africa program at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), said the proposal “would be a major setback for justice for grave crimes.” She warned that this was a sign of Africa’s leaders “supporting each other,” at the expense of the rule of law.

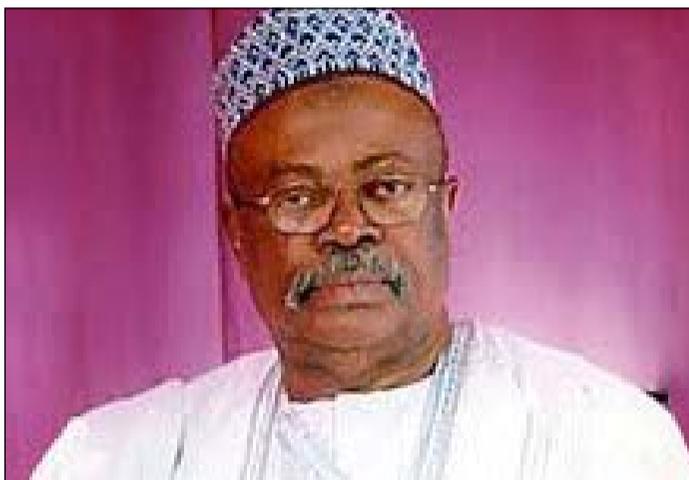
“Impunity remains one of the biggest threats to human rights protection in Africa,” said Thuso Ramabolu, human rights officer at Lesotho’s Transformation Resource Centre.

“It’s crucial for people responsible for mass atrocities to face justice, irrespective of their official positions. Immunity poses grave alarm and would create an incentive to hold on to power indefinitely,” Ramabolu added.

“We have observed that countries where Americans interfered in like Afghanistan, Iraq and even Libya, they still suffer crises till today because they are oil rich states. If we allow America to interfere in our matters, something similar may happen to us.”

OE Watch Commentary: Few events in recent memory have highlighted the United States’ relationship with Nigeria more starkly than the recent kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from the northeastern Nigerian town of Chibok by the militant Islamist group Boko Haram. This spate of kidnappings, while initially underreported, has since caused waves of global outrage, leading to the viral advocacy campaign #bringbackourgirls, which has shown both the inefficacy of the Nigerian government and compelling new forms of cooperation to fight the group from the international community, including the United States. However, Nigerian perspectives on just what the nature of U.S. involvement should be – and what it might or might not serve to accomplish – vary dramatically.

As the accompanying articles detail, many Nigerians seem to approach U.S. military assistance with caution, basing their understandings of what future engagement might be on other U.S. interventions in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The Nigerians’ opinions reflected here tend to view the U.S. as relatively unsuccessful at being able to effectively deal with insurgencies, spending, as they see it, a tremendous amount of money for long periods of time with few tangible gains. Perhaps inevitably, many in the country also tend to view any interest in assisting Nigeria as being primarily motivated by U.S. interests in Nigerian oil. Critics cite the U.S. invasion of Iraq as proof of U.S. petro-militarism. Finally, some of the more conspiratorial elements in the country believe that U.S. intervention in Nigeria to help in the fight against Boko Haram would only be a cover of a much larger grand strategic scheme by Washington to ultimately dismantle the Nigerian state – via state subversion – by 2015, the date the national presidential elections are slated to occur. As such, it could be said that Nigerian critics of U.S. assistance range from those ambivalent about the actual gains that U.S. intervention might achieve to those who are outright hostile toward any U.S. presence in the country. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**



Alhaji-Abubakar
Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/05/boko-haram-united-states-may-cause-confusion/alhaji-abubakar/>

Source: “US cannot end Boko Haram in Nigeria, says director in ONSA,” This Day Live, (Lagos, Nigeria), 20 May 2014: <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/us-cannot-end-boko-haram-in-nigeria-says-director-in-onsa/178968/>

The Director of Policy Strategy in the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), Ambassador Layiwola Lasehinde, has made it clear that America cannot bring Boko Haram to an end in Nigeria...

“It took American 10 years to locate Bin Laden and when you are talking of resources, American government spent huge amount of money in search of Bin Laden, who was sitting in a house close to a military station.”

“America cannot solve the terrorism problem in Afghanistan and they were there for years, spending \$1million everyday. They were also in Iraq, spending \$1m everyday also. In fact, what they have achieved there now was worse than when they got there.”

Source: Ajayi, Olayinka, “Boko Haram: United States May Cause More Confusion,” The Vanguard, (Lagos, Nigeria), 17 May 2014: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/05/boko-haram-united-states-may-cause-confusion/>

****The following is an excerpt of an interview between a reporter and Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, a retired police commissioner.****

Q: But since the International community is now involved do you think releasing jailed Boko Haram members is the best solution?

A: Let us wait to see the intelligence countries like the United States and Britain will bring on deck.

Q: Is it proper to link this insurgent group with foreign elements?

A: We have observed that countries where Americans interfered in like Afghanistan, Iraq and even Libya, they still suffer crises till today because they are oil rich States. If we allow America to interfere in our matters, something similar may happen to us. If you recall vividly, they predicted come 2015 that Nigeria will disintegrate. Their coming into this matter may cause more confusion because they are most times interested in crude oil.

“We’re not saying we are better than the Nigerian soldiers, but we know the bush better than the soldiers.”

OE Watch Commentary: *As confidence in the Nigerian military and government falls to an all-time low, traditional hunters in northeastern Nigeria are taking the hunt for Boko Haram and the Chibok girls into their own hands. Whether this tactic will ultimately prove beneficial or harmful remains unclear.*

On one hand, the traditional hunters might very well offer some benefits. As noted in the accompanying article, given their familiarity with the land, including its flora, fauna, topography, and degrees of habitability, these men likely do have a far more comprehensive understanding of the physical terrain of the Boko Haram-affected areas than does the Nigerian military, the vast majority of whom had never been to the area before. Beyond their understanding of the land itself, these local hunters have a far better understanding of the human considerations: their networks of connections in surrounding towns, villages, mosques, and markets, in addition to their logically acute understanding of local socio-cultural norms, seemingly render them ideal sources for the gathering of human intelligence. Finally, as locals note, given the rather limited presence of Nigerian troops at all, the sheer addition of manpower in adding to the search might assist rather than retard these efforts.

However, numerous problems might arise. Beyond any intelligence-gathering capabilities, the acknowledgement of these hunters as legitimate counterinsurgent forces operating in parallel to the military risks legitimizing them as a paramilitary group that could rival the Nigerian state and/or ally with Boko Haram in the future. Moreover, incorporating a low-technology group into the fold of an already wide-ranging counterinsurgency operation – comprising an array of Nigerian security forces, as well as West African and now a slew of non-African entities – could complicate the security landscape even further.

Nevertheless, keeping in mind these informal and local sides of counterinsurgency remains an important dimension in global efforts to better understand Nigeria’s operational environment. End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)



Girls were abducted on April 14 2014.

Source: <http://www.theparadigmng.com/>

Source: “Traditional Hunters Ready to Join Search for Chibok Girls,” ThisDayLive (Lagos, Nigeria), 20 May 2014: <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/traditional-hunters-ready-to-join-search-for-chibok-girls/178970/>.

Traditional Hunters Ready to Join Search for Chibok Girls

Worried by the prolonged delay in the search and rescue of the kidnapped Chibok female students, traditional hunters armed with home-made guns, poisoned spears and amulets have gathered in their hundreds, eager to use their skills and what they believe to be supernatural powers to help find the girls abducted by Islamic extremists last week.

Some 500 hunters, some as young as 18 and some in their 80s, said they had been specially selected by their peers for their spiritual hunting skills and had been waiting for two weeks in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital and the birthplace of Boko Haram, to get the backing of the military to get moving.

With Nigeria’s military accused by many citizens of not doing enough to rescue the girls, the hunters demonstrated their skills to [a foreign reporter] on Sunday. With cow horn trumpets echoing eerie war cries from the screaming and chanting men who twirled knives and swords with dexterity, occasionally stabbing and cutting themselves with no apparent harm. The hunters claimed their magic charms prevented any blood being drawn. They also trust amulets of herbs and other substances wrapped in leather pouches as well as cowrie shells, animal teeth and leather bracelets, including a cocktail of fetish equipage which provides them spiritual Teflon that protects them from being pierced by bullets. It will ultimately be a contest of traditional armoury against western arsenal....

“We’re not saying we are better than the soldiers, but we know the bush better than the soldiers,” said Sarkin Baka. The hunters said they had gathered at the suggestion of a state legislator.

Some parents of the abducted girls say villagers in the Sambisa Forest tell them they haven’t seen a uniformed soldier in the forest.

“We are seasoned hunters, the bush is our culture and we have the powers that defy guns and knives; we are real men of courage, we trust in Allah for protection, but we are not afraid of Boko Haram,” said one elderly hunter, Baban Kano.

Security Situation Exacerbates Tensions Between Nigerian Regions: North To Blame

20 May 2014

“The complacency, wickedness and evil characters of Northern Governors are what brought us here. They are ineffective.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The historical tensions that have always characterized Nigeria’s three broad regions appear to be getting worse in light of the deepening security crises. As the three accompanying articles emphasize anecdotally, citizens in each of the regions are increasingly distrustful of the others, to the extent that talks of secession are now coming to light in the ethnic Yoruba region, arguably, the country’s most important.*

Nigerians generally think of their country as comprising three main regions: the southwest (dominated by the Yoruba); the southeast (dominated by Igbo and Ijaw) and the north (dominated by the Hausa-Fulani). Various divides have characterized their tensions: the Muslim north feels as though it is being dominated by the Christian south politically and economically, while the oil-rich southeast feels as though it is bankrolling the rest of the country while receiving comparatively few benefits in return. For its part, the Yoruba-dominated southwest tends to feel as though it bears an unnecessary burden of leadership and power-sharing in the cobbled together country. Nigerians are quick to acknowledge these tensions, yet are fiercely critical when non-Nigerians suggest that their state might dissolve. This has especially been the case in advance of the 2015 elections, when various international observers, including the U.S., have wargamed disintegration scenarios, much to the outrage of Nigerians themselves.

Yet, the recent global embarrassment of the kidnapping of the Chibok girls has only exacerbated tensions among the regions. Perhaps most surprisingly, the first article details how a prominent Yoruba-rights group recently unveiled its most radical claim in years, demanding regional autonomy for the Yoruba people, including a possible secession from the rest of Nigeria. While Yorubas have always considered themselves culturally distinct, it appears that the new calls for



National Conference delegates
Source: <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/grant-us-regionalism-or-nothing-says-yoruba/178948/>

Source: Akinsanmi, Gboyega, “Grant us Regionalism or Nothing, Says Yoruba,” ThisDayLive (Lagos, Nigeria). 20 May 2014: <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/grant-us-regionalism-or-nothing-says-yoruba/178948/>

Midway into the on-going National Conference, the Yoruba yesterday made a stronger demand for regional autonomy, which it said, was the minimum condition for remaining in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The ethnic group, which basically comprises six states in the southwest geopolitical zone, expressed strong will “to exercise its right of self-determination on and up to the right to secede if its demand for regional autonomy is not granted.”...

They acknowledged that it was inconceivable that northern leaders “are the ones leading the campaign against devolution of power and restructuring of government.”

The ethnic group said it was baffled at...the Northern delegates who circulated a document full of fallacies few weeks ago that the North “has about 80 per cent of Nigerian population and that its resources were used to develop oil sectors.”

According to the Yoruba, it appeared that Northern leaders were not concerned, and indeed had no plan for the teeming youth from the region, as long as they were able to continue clinging to their hold on power. The group stated that Yoruba “want a regional government with its own constitution and unfettered political and fiscal autonomy, except on issues it agrees to cede to the federal government.”

Source: Ahon, Festus. “Boko Haram Insurgence: a plan to divide Nigeria,” The Vanguard (Lagos, Nigeria), 20 May 2014: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/05/boko-haram-insurgence-plan-divide-nigeria-says-omo-agege/>

Secretary to the Delta State Government, SSG, Obarisi Ovie Omo-Agege, has said the ongoing Boko Haram insurgence was not a mere distractions but part of plans to divide Nigerians along religious lines to bring the government of President Jonathan down and abort his transformation agenda in order to retain the many ills that bedevil the Nigeria nation.

(continued)

Continued: Security Situation Exacerbates Tensions Between Nigerian Regions: North To Blame

secession are being at least partly, if not wholly, motivated by displeasure about the security situation in the north, whose leaders, Yorubas claim, are responsible for tearing the country apart, thanks to their calamitous approach to the security situation. Interestingly, the new plan calls for increased autonomy for Yoruba security mechanisms, including, perhaps distressingly, a regional, exclusively Yoruban police force.

As the second article relays, citizens in southwest Nigeria, the homeland of President Goodluck Jonathan, are expressing disdain for the north, but for a slightly different reason. For their part, they claim that northern governors are letting Boko Haram run amok to embarrass their compatriot Goodluck Jonathan, who stands for re-election in 2015. Instead of interpreting the northern leaders to simply be unable to combat the group, southeastern Igbos and Ijaws look at the north as trying to wrest control of the presidency away from them. Fascinatingly, while nearly all other segments of Nigerian society are distancing themselves from President Jonathan, who has been shockingly inefficient in dealing with Boko Haram, members of his region are urging the opposite. To that end, one southeastern politician urged that citizens in the region should send the message that “no amount of man-made carnage will make us abandon our President.”

*Finally, as the third article details, even governors from within the northern region themselves – though not the states primarily affected by Boko Haram – are pointing fingers at the “lazy” governors of northern Nigeria, who, they claim, are profiting from the insurgency. The last thing Nigeria needed was another reason for national disunity. Nevertheless, this is exactly what it got. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

Omo-Agege said the single goal of the Boko Haram was to bring the government of President Goodluck Jonathan down even if it means taking Nigeria down in the process.

He therefore urged Nigerians across the world to join hands with President Goodluck Jonathan to jointly transform the country and create a future worthy of the visions and dreams of their founding fathers. He said; “If we let them succeed, we will be setting a dangerous precedent that all it takes is a few unwise and reckless feudalists to conspire and finance terrorists to chase an elected president out of office, hiding behind the facade of religion.”

Source: Elebeke, Emmanuel, “Northern Govs: complacency, wickedness, evil characters brought us here,” The Vanguard, (Lagos, Nigeria), 20 May 2014: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/05/hold-northern-governors-responsible-insecurity-aliyu-garbi/#sthash.uxktNFpk.dpuf>

The member representation Bauchi federal Constituency, Hon. Aliyu Garbi has voiced out his anger over the abduction of the missing Chibok schoolgirls and asked Nigerians to hold the northern governors responsible for the insecurity in the region.

The lawmaker... blamed the insecurity on what he termed the complacency and wickedness of the Governors from the Northern region.

He warned against pushing the blame on the federal government, insisting that the Governors from the region, as chief security officers of the states, and the local government authorities and traditional rulers should take more of the blames, rather than redirecting the blame to the centre. “The complacency, wickedness and evil characters of Northern Governors are what brought us here. They are ineffective, if we must have change, it is not at the centre but from the state level. We can keep blaming the centre because we are also being distracted and misdirected by certain people. Change must come from state level, if we want to fight Boko Haram.

“The delegates called on the Federal Government and stakeholders to, as a matter of urgency, implement all actionable recommendations made to it by various committees for the prosecution of some politicians found to be financing and empowering members of Boko Haram.”

OE Watch Commentary: Since March 2014 Boko Haram violence has reached its highest levels. Attacks included a prison break at Giwa Barracks freeing hundreds of militants on 31 March, the kidnapping of two Italian priests and one Canadian nun in Cameroon on 5 April, a car bombing at a bus terminal in Abuja that killed about 100 people on 14 April, the kidnapping of more than 250 girls from a secondary school in Borno State on 15 April, and the massacre of about 300 people in the Nigeria-Cameroon border town of Gambarou-Nfala on 8 May. Moreover, twice in April Boko Haram reportedly killed members of the All Progressives Congress, which is the political party set to challenge President Goodluck Jonathan in elections in February 2015. The escalation in attacks in Nigeria follows Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau's threats that Christian women will be “sold as slaves in the market” and that Boko Haram will strike Abuja and Lagos.

According to an article in Vanguard, in an effort to combat Boko Haram, on 15 April delegates in Nigeria's National Assembly vowed to “prosecute politicians found to be financing and empowering members of Boko Haram.” This is based on the assumption that leaders from northern Nigeria, who supported Boko Haram financially before it launched the insurgency in 2009, are still supporting the group. However, most of its financing now comes from looting villages and banks in northeastern Nigeria, kidnapping-for-ransom operations in Nigeria and Cameroon, and “donations” from al-Qaeda franchises, such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

Therefore, it is unlikely that the National Assembly's plan, if implemented, will curtail Boko Haram attacks. Rather, what could have an effect on Boko Haram operations is for Nigeria to establish a partnership with neighboring countries to eliminate Boko Haram bases in the Lake Chad sub-region and coordinate with other security agencies in Africa to uncover and dismantle Boko Haram's funding and logistical connections to other militant groups. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



After Boko Haram kidnapped 200 girls from a secondary school in Borno State in April 2014, the parents and siblings of the hostages took on the task of searching for their loved ones. Source: <http://naijagists.com/bama-army-barracks-attack-boko-haram-kidnapped-soldiers-wives-children/>

Source: “Abuja explosions: Delegates Want Boko Haram Financiers Prosecuted,” Vanguard, April 15, 2014. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/04/abuja-explosions-delegates-want-boko-haram-financiers-prosecuted/>

Abuja explosions: Delegates want Boko Haram financiers prosecuted

With teary eyes, delegates, yesterday, condemned in strong terms, bomb explosions at Nyanya bus terminal in Abuja, the nation's capital, by members of the Boko Haram sect in which about 100 people were feared dead and several others injured.

The delegates, who observed one-minute silence for the victims, also condemned past and similar mayhem in other parts of the county. The delegates called on the Federal Government and stakeholders to, as a matter of urgency, implement all actionable recommendations made to it by various committees for the prosecution of some politicians found to be financing and empowering members of Boko Haram.

To heal the wounds inflicted on Nigerians and families affected in these massive killings and wanton destruction of property almost on a daily basis, they advised the Federal Government to immediately commence a process of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected areas.

They urged that all necessary measures be put in place to use proportional and non-excessive force to deal with the situation and safeguard the life, property and well-being of innocent civilian population in all areas affected. Leading a robust debate on the motion, Modibbo Kawu lamented that despite the declaration of state of emergency in three North East states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, the insecurity in those states has continued to escalate.

Commenting, Amb. Yerima Abdullahi representing the Elder Statesmen said: “We have been scratching the surface of this issue of Boko Haram. Some of these undertakers are not Nigerians. It may have started with Nigerians but these people are not Nigerians. Security may have better information. They have roots in Cameroon, Niger, Chad, etc. We have a very big problem. Security forces should show more interest. The earlier the authorities woke up to this situation, the better.”

“They sow the country with terror because they feel validated...”

OE Watch Commentary: *Colectivo* or ‘collective’ is a current term applied to what is not exactly a gang, not exactly a military unit, and not exactly a formal militia. In Venezuela the term is currently applied to motorcycle militias. Venezuela has a high population of motorcycles. The National Guard, for instance (which is considered part of the armed forces, but has a mandate that includes control of internal disorder), is heavily invested in the motorcycle. Most of the members of the collectives apparently own their own cycles. Some of the bikes are medium weight highway rockets, others 180-240cc hybrid street/all terrain bikes, some motocross cycles, and others inexpensive city bikes.

When called upon, members of a collective are marshaled and given a mission, perhaps to break up a barrier being manned by some student protesters. The collectives have dispersed demonstrations, dismantled roadblocks, and generally intimidated those who get in their way. Most of the Venezuelan motorcycle collectives appear to be enthusiastically ‘Chavista,’ that is, in favor of the government, or at least the government-led socialist program. It also appears the government has only limited control over some of them. To the extent they can be controlled and can be made to coordinate with the more official motorcycle units at the disposal of the government, they present us with a growing, if not entirely new, set of tactics, techniques, and procedures. Especially when combined with the cell-phone, the motorcycle units can be assembled quickly, move quickly within a significant radius and disperse quickly. The counters appear to be fairly obvious -- barbed wire barriers, phone calls home, cul-de-sac traps. The bike battles are quickly cycling through adjustments and counter adjustments, but the phenomenon is likely to spread from Venezuela throughout the region. Motorcycle collectives are becoming a part of irregular warfare. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Members of the ‘Collective’.

Source: <http://angelicamorabeals2.blogspot.com/2014/02/el-gobierno-de-venezuela-emplea-avispas.html>

Source: El País, “Así operan los ‘colectivos’, las fuerzas paramilitares chavistas de Venezuela (This is how the ‘colectivos’, the Chavist paramilitary forces in Venezuela, operate), ElPaís.com.co, February 23, 2014, <http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/internacional/noticias/asi-operan-colectivos-fuerzas-paramilitares-chavistas-venezuela>.

“They sow the country with terror because they feel validated not only by ex-president Chávez who displayed them as the armed wing of the revolution, but now by President Maduro who just congratulated them publicly for the role they are filling...”

Source: Fausta Rodríguez, “Venezuela: The marauding motorcyclists,” October, 2013, <http://faustasblog.com/2013/10/venezuela-the-marauding-motorcyclists>, citing, Daniel Duquenal, “The society Chavez has left us: barbarians inside the gate,” Venezuelan News and Views, September 27, 2013, <http://daniel-venezuela.blogspot.com/2013/09/the-society-chavez-has-left-us.html>.

...“the society of motorbikes is a creation of chavismo who has subsidized them heavily in the early years because they were their storm troopers to quickly go around town to crush any anti Chavez protest.”

Source: Infobae, “Venezuela: denuncian que las milicias civiles chavistas quemaron otro campamento opositor,” (Venezuela: Accusations that the Chavist civil militias burned another opposition encampment), Infobae América, May 9, 2014, <http://www.infobae.com/2014/05/09/1563098-venezuela-denuncian-que-las-milicias-civiles-chavistas-quemaron-otrocampamento-opositor>.

“Anti-Chavist student leader Victor Vanega informed that a group of motorcyclists attacked the ‘for liberty’ activists in downtown Maracay. He decried, “There are many students with bullet wounds or who are missing.”

(continued)

Continued: Motomilicias

“...shock brigades that the government can quickly use...”

Source: Wikipedia, “Fuerzas Armadas de Venezuela” (Armed Forces of Venezuela) Wikipedia, accessed May 17, 2014, http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuerzas_Armadas_de_Venezuela.

“National Guard...Motorcycle Patrols at the National Level: **500,000**”

Source: El Comercio, “Cinco milicias armadas son leales al chavismo” (Five armed militias are loyal Chavist), El Comercio.com, accessed May 17, 2014, http://www.elcomercio.com/mundo/Chavismo-Hugo_Chavez-milicias-armadas-colectivos-urbanos-violencia-guerrillas-Venezuela-inseguridad-Capriles-Maduro_0_899910026.html

“Briceño defines the urban collectives as ‘shock brigades that the government can quickly use’ and they are alarming for the risk that they represent: ‘When you have a weapon and a motorcycle and the amount of Money they are giving you seems insufficient, you decide you need to make a little extra money and you go over to common crime.’”



Thousands of motorcycles assembled in the country through joint ventures.
Source: http://signosdeizquierda.blogspot.com/2012_07_01_archive.html

Radical Islam’s Western Foothold:

Hugo Chavez and Hezbollah

By Sam Pickell

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

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



OE Watch Commentary: *Los Zetas are operational in nearly all of Mexico, but their strongholds lie in Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon. In these areas they are able to conduct their operations with high levels of impunity, so much so that local authorities are even known to provide them with security if they decide to host public celebrations. This idea is evidenced by the public hosting of two recent parties: a Christmas Celebration in December 2013 (see February Operational Environment Watch) and a Children's Day Party in April 2014, both of which were held at the Victoria Music Hall in Ciudad Victoria.*

April 2014 Children's Day Party

Los Zetas have been hosting Children's Day parties since around 2006. As in other years, the group hung banners and distributed flyers to invite local residents. The 2014 party was complete with gifts, music, raffles, a clown show, and a doll show. Entrance to the event was free, as were the amusement rides offered in a nearby parking lot.

Why Los Zetas Host Parties for the Local Populace?

*What is peculiar about a drug cartel throwing a party of this nature is that Children's Day is widely celebrated in Mexico and parties are generally hosted and paid for by local governments. The difference between the government-funded parties and the cartel-funded parties is that the amenities offered at government parties are not as extravagant, i.e., food may or may not be provided, raffles may have undesirable prizes, and gifts may be more basic. That being said, throwing parties for the local populace serves two principal purposes for Los Zetas. First, since the government parties are not on par with cartel parties, the government appears inept. Second, throwing parties helps to bolster the public image of Los Zetas, as this group is commonly known as the most violent and reckless drug trafficking organization in Mexico. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)***



Narco-pamphlet distributed on behalf of Los Zetas.
Source: <http://www.elblogdelnarco.info/2014/04/marcopanfletos-de-parte-de-heriberto.html>

Source: "Narcopanfletos de parte de Heriberto Lazcano Z-3 de los Zetas en @ Cd_Victoria." Blogdelnarco. Accessed on 28 April 2014 from <http://www.elblogdelnarco.info/2014/04/marcopanfletos-de-parte-de-heriberto.html>

Los Zetas Host Children's Day Celebration in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas

Los Zetas hosted a Children's Day party on 30 April 2014 in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas. Multiple posters and flyers were distributed to spread the word amongst residents. The message contained within the flyers has been translated as follows:

"Youth Association of Ciudad Victoria. We invite all children from Victoria to celebrate Children's Day with us at the Victoria Music Hall on 30 April at 5:00 pm. We will be handing out gifts and will have raffles, a clown show, and a doll show. We will also have amusement rides in the parking lot. Don't forget, 30 April at 5pm. We look forward to seeing you. Entrance to this event is free."

According to this source, it is common knowledge that the "Youth Association of Ciudad Victoria" has been utilized by Los Zetas to host other parties.

Pending Inauguration of Nicaraguan Border Checkpoint Puts the Costa Rican Government on Edge

26 April 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *Approximately three years ago Japan, with approval from the Nicaraguan government, initiated the construction of a \$30 million bridge in Nicaragua that connects the San Juan Bridge (Nicaragua) with Los Chiles (Costa Rica). This 360-meter-long bridge was recently completed, and Nicaragua announced it will be opening its border checkpoint on 10 May 2014. Despite planned intentions by the Nicaraguan government, the Costa Rican government has not yet set up a border checkpoint in Los Chiles, although it has been stated that immigration facilities should be in place by 2015.*

The opening of this new checkpoint is a controversial issue and has been viewed by Costa Rican Minister of Defense Mario Zamora as a “hostile act” that is intended to force Luis Guillermo Solís, the President elect, to establish direct dialog with the Nicaraguan government, which he has declined to do thus far. Zamora further indicated that the largest fear of the Costa Rican government is that without necessary customs infrastructure in place, illegal immigration could get out of control. This idea was reiterated by Costa Rica Director of Immigration Kathya Rodriguez when she stated that there will be no place for the individuals crossing from Nicaragua to go, as the Costa Rican border checkpoint is not yet ready.

Border Animosity that Runs Deeper than the Santa Fe Bridge:

*The common border area between Costa Rica and Nicaragua has been a source of contention for years, as the governments have had previous disagreements regarding land ownership (Guanacaste), natural resources (water supply, the San Juan River and the Colorado River) and illegal immigration (from Nicaragua to Costa Rica). This last issue is a major source of contention, as Costa Rica is now home to 350,000 migrants, many of whom hail from Nicaragua. Although Costa Rica ranks 97th in the world in per capita income at \$10,900 a year, the situation in Nicaragua is much worse, where the average per capita income is \$2,800 a year. The income disparity between Costa Rica and Nicaragua continues to draw migrant workers from Nicaragua, and the new border crossing point set to open on 10 May 2014 has raised fears that the immigration issue will only intensify in coming years. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)***



Picture of the new bridge.
Source: UNKNOWN

Source: Apertura de puesto fronterizo en lado nica inquieta a Policía.” La Nacion. Accessed on 29 April 2014 from http://www.nacion.com/sucesos/seguridad/Pronta-apertura-frontera-desvela-Policia_0_1410059005.html

Pending Inauguration of Nicaraguan Border Checkpoint Puts the Costa Rican Government on Edge

Approximately 3 years ago, Japan, with approval from the Nicaraguan government, initiated construction on a \$30 million bridge in Nicaragua. This bridge connects Santa Fe (Nicaragua) with Los Chiles (Costa Rica) and is expected to open in April or May 2014. A direct benefit of this bridge is that it will cut travel time from Managua to San Jose (capital cities of Nicaragua and Costa Rica) by 100 kilometers. It will also allow transport trucks entering into Costa Rica from Panama to travel up the Caribbean Coast instead of having to cross over to the Peñas Blancas border crossing which is located along the Inter-American Highway in the northwest corner of Costa Rica. However, the most direct route possible which is from Limon to the Santa Fe Bridge will not be accessible until the Chilamante-Vuelta Cooper Highway section in Costa Rica is complete.

Concerns Associated with the Bridge and the New Route:

While this bridge is expected to bring trade and economic development to small producers in the rural border zone, the Costa Rican government is concerned about possible illegal immigration increases and national security breaches. But despite these concerns, immigration facilities in Los Chiles are not open even though Nicaragua has indicated that it will open its border checkpoint on 10 May 2014.

With this date fast approaching, Kathya Rodríguez, the Costa Rican Director of Immigration, indicated that mobile border checkpoints will be set up in Los Chiles, but expressed frustration regarding the opening of Nicaragua’s impending border checkpoint with the following comment “in order for there to be a border, there needs to be two sides. That being said, where all these people going to exit to?” Furthermore, Mario Zamora, the Costa Rican Minister of Defense, deemed the opening of the checkpoint on the Nicaraguan side as a “hostile act” that is intended to force Luis Guillermo Solís, the President elect, to establish direct dialog with the Nicaraguan government which he has declined to do thus far.

Narco-Resistance to Rio de Janeiro's Police Pacification Units Coalesces in the Weeks before the World Cup

7 May 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *As the clock to the World Cup ticks down, violence targeting State Security Forces in Rio de Janeiro's favelas is spinning out of control. As of May 23, 2014, 127 policemen have been shot in Rio de Janeiro State. Of those only four were municipal police, with the remainder being Military Police (Brazilian Military Police have no affiliation with the Brazilian Armed Forces and are more akin to State Troopers in the United States). Of those 123, 79 were on duty at the time of their wounds, 43 were off duty (four were retired and one was a recruit) and 31 eventually succumbed to their wounds. These statistics fail to account for an equal or greater number of shootouts that have occurred without injury to officers or the two separate Police Pacification Units (UPP) that have had their headquarters torched to the ground this year.*

The spike is not linked to any of the temporary security service work stoppages that have plagued four separate Brazilian states and threatened seven others since the beginning of April. That catastrophe has not yet come to pass in Rio. Instead, paradoxically, the violence has been most intense in the areas most heavily policed: the "pacified" Rio favelas. These cold statistics, along with cell phone intercepts and interrogations, suggest officials in Rio are facing a new paradigm: a coordinated armed resistance in the pacified favelas ordered and organized by the leaders of Rio's three largest narco-gangs (Comando Vermelho, Amigos dos Amigos, and Terceiro Comando Puro) from behind the bars of their individual prison cells. If true, this counteroffensive constitutes a significant departure from the trafficker's previous tactics of displacing to unoccupied favelas or simply taking their operations (and arms) underground.

For its part, the Rio state response has been predictable: augment available civilian security personnel and UPPs with Brazilian Armed Forces, a lot of them, and flood the streets with an armed state presence in order to tamp down the violence. For example, the initial occupation of the Mare Favela Complex went so poorly in the first two weeks of April that the governor of Rio requested and received a parachute infantry brigade from Brazil's Eastern Military Command (headquartered in Rio) to augment



An unidentified Rio de Janeiro Military Policeman posted on a popular Rio Police / Security Blog a sign reading "I have a family. I do not deserve to die, nor be enslaved. I want my vacation". Denial of accrued vacation in light of deteriorating security and the upcoming World Cup has been a frequent complaint of Military Policemen Brazil wide, to say nothing of the deliberate targeting of Military Police by Rio's gangs and traffickers. Source: <http://robertatrindade.com.br/>

Source: <http://extra.globo.com/noticias/rio/traficantes-presos-estariam-ordenando-ataques-areas-com-upp-11756766.html#ixzz32HmvFBst>

"The order for the series of attacks on the Police Pacification Units, that killed one MP in February and left two others wounded, was sent from within the federal prisons outside of Rio de Janeiro state, where the principal leaders of Rio's gangs are held... Police intelligence sources indicate two motives behind the attacks. An attempt to re-establish, in pacified areas, the drug trade which was the principal source of income for the gang, and above all, the chiefs' interests in completing their prison sentences in Rio."

Source: <http://robertatrindade.com.br/?p=17784>

Lucas Falco, an Military Police officer assigned to the Police Pacification Unit in the Rocinha Favela of Rio de Janeiro was discovered left for dead by a groundskeeper/gravedigger at an animal cemetery off the Rua João Garcia da Rosa in Rio de Janeiro on the morning of April 8th. At the time he was discovered, Officer Lucas had suffered a minimum of 8 gunshot wounds (7 to his lower extremities and one in the arm).

Police quickly arrested two members of the Comando Vermelho (the single largest gang in Rio de Janeiro and the second largest in the country) for the crime. Erick de Alemida Rodrigues, 19, and a juvenile known only as "JG", 12, were arrested for the crimes and interrogated. At the time of their arrests the two individuals were found with a .38 caliber revolver, three handheld raioes, 4 cellular phones, and 75 packages of cocaine ready for immediate sale totaling 200 grams of cocaine, and a machete.

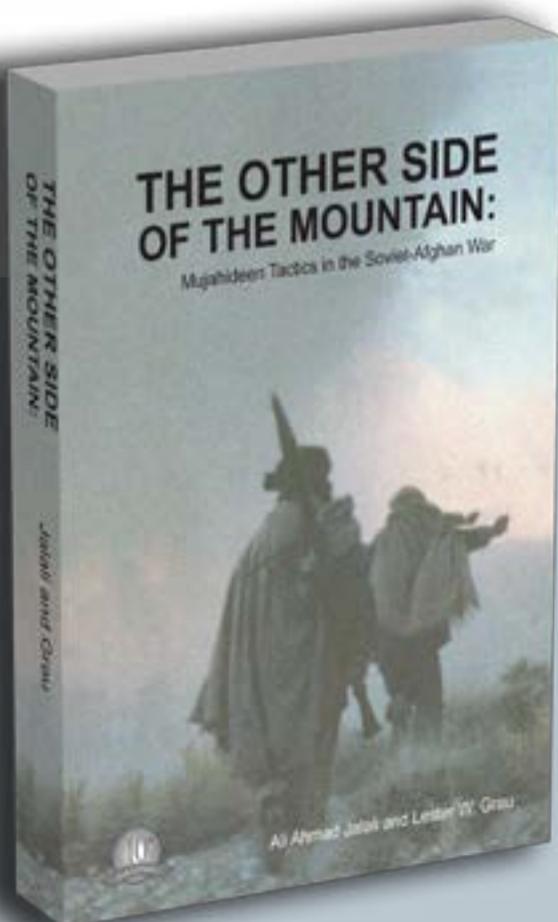
(continued)

Continued: Narco-Resistance to Rio de Janeiro's Police Pacification Units Coalesces in the Weeks before the World Cup

the state police units in the favela. The effects have been just as predictable. Street violence is increasing as daily shootouts between security forces and well armed gang members continue to cut down police, gang members, and innocent bystanders at a frightening rate. However, the killing of innocents, usually an accidental tragedy but occasionally a deliberate act by a frustrated and desperate police force, serves only to erode the public confidence in the security forces at a time when the world's attention is turning to Brazil and Rio de Janeiro. End OE Watch Commentary (Grilo)

Source: <http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=14789>

On Tuesday, April 22, a young man was found dead inside a day care center in Pavão-Pavãozinho, South Zone of Rio, allegedly killed by local Pacifying Police Unit (UPP) officers. His body, curled up on the floor, reportedly bore boot marks and other signs of beating. A later photo appeared to show that he had also been shot in the back. The victim, Douglas Rafael da Silva Pereira (known as DG), was a dancer on Rede Globo's hugely popular Sunday afternoon TV program, Esquenta. The reaction to DG's death was explosive, with subsequent protests—spilling out into Copacabana, to the shock of tourists and Rio's wealthy—receiving extensive international coverage.



Les Grau's classic *The Other Side of the Mountain*, is the most broadly distributed book on the Afghan theater. Capturing the personal stories and perspectives of Mujahedin fighters during the Soviet Afghan war, Les Grau has provided a blueprint of the belligerents in the current conflict.

It is on General Petraeus's reading list and in the rucksacks of deploying soldiers.

“...we note the importance of strengthening our collective efforts in cybersecurity in order to create a secure business environment.”



ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Policy Meeting on Cyber Security Cooperation in September 2013.
Source: <http://www.thepresidentpost.com/2013/09/16/asean-japan-ministerial-policy-meeting-on-cybersecurity-cooperation/>

OE Watch Commentary: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in conjunction with Japan, has recognized the need for a unified approach to “cybersecurity cooperation.” This critical issue regarding the global commons was approached from an economic perspective rather than a national security one. The primary participants in the September 2013 conference were the national ministers in charge of information and communications. ASEAN members are facing challenges to their access to cyberspace as disruptions occur through the actions of commercial competitors, political activists, and criminals. The Joint Ministerial Statement provides insight into the regional perspective and combined approach to cyberspace access. The document from the Japan Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is well worth reading in its entirety.

Both Australia and the Philippines have experienced the impact of actions from the shadows of cyberspace. The news blog site, Softpedia, reports hackers from Indonesia attacking Australian websites in response to a spying scandal. The Malaysia Insider reports that “Anonymous Philippines,” an online activist group, attacked Philippine government websites to protest political corruption. Each nation is having significant difficulty in identifying and stopping the attackers.

Source: Japan Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, “Joint Ministerial Statement on Cyber Security Cooperation”, September 13, 2013 <http://www.meti.go.jp/press/2013/09/20130913005/20130913005-5.pdf> Japan Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, “Joint Ministerial Statement on Cyber Security Cooperation”, September 13, 2013 <http://www.meti.go.jp/press/2013/09/20130913005/20130913005-5.pdf>

We, the Ministers of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations... Believe that a secure cyberspace is one of the major drivers in innovation as well as being essential in promoting social and economic activities and strengthening ASEAN connectivity.

- I. CREATING A SECURE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT....**
- II. BUILDING A SECURE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK....**
- III. ENHANCING CAPACITY FOR CYBERSECURITY....**

Source: Softpedia, “Indonesian Hackers Still Target Innocent Australian Websites,” November 9, 2013 <http://news.softpedia.com/news/Indonesian-Hackers-Still-Target-Innocent-Australian-Websites-Despite-Being-Warned-398644.shtml>

Indonesian hackers continue to target websites belonging to Australian organizations that have nothing to do with the government.

... Anonymous Australia urged them to stop attacking innocent websites.

... Indonesian hacktivists ... launched distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) attacks against the sites of the Australian Secret Intelligence Services (asis.gov.au)

(continued)

Continued: Cyberspace: Action and Access

An article from The Hindu lays out current concerns of the Indian military about vulnerabilities and threats it is experiencing in cyberspace. These are specifically related to national security and point to the widespread regional awareness of the dangers and potential advantages offered by information technologies used against military targets. A series of reports have come out over the past few years accusing China of attacking Indian military and government computers and networks. The article from Indian Express details the breach of Defence Research and Development Organisation computers by Chinese hackers. India has responded to this emerging challenge by planning a joint military Cyber Command. An article from DNA India online news details this initiative.

*Access to the cyberspace commons has become both promise and problem to the peoples and governments throughout the Indo-Pacific Asia realm. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)***

and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (asio.gov.au).

....However, Cyber War News reports that attempts to hack Australian government websites have failed, so some hacktivists resumed attacks against commercial sites....



India Army Chief of Staff General Bikram Singh

Source: <http://static.dnaindia.com/sites/default/files/2014/01/16/1951004.jpg>

Source: DNA India, "India readies cyber command service to combat espionage threats online," January 15, 2014, <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-india-readies-cyber-command-service-to-combat-espionage-threats-online-1950997>

No army, air force or navy can ignore the cyber world and live with it. Wars of this century will be fought not just on land, air and water, but also in the virtual space...

The ministry of defence has a draft on the subject ready which the cabinet committee on security, headed by the prime minister, would be taking up for discussion in the days to come. "A note for the cabinet committee on security has been prepared for setting up the tri-service cyber command," Gen Singh said.

Sources said the office of the chairman, chief of staff committee, has written a detailed note to defence minister AK Antony regarding setting up cyber command. Officials, privy to drafting the cabinet note, told dna that the need to have a cyber command has been felt for a long time, as the cyber security infrastructure of the country is "weak".

This is evident from recent incidents of cyber attacks on India. Last year, Chinese hackers broke into sensitive computer systems at the headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam, where the indigenous nuclear submarine Arihant has been undergoing sea trials....

Potential Chinese Foothold in the Arctic

30 April 2014

“A rare ‘For Sale’ sign is up in Svalbard and countries who want a place to call home in the Arctic Circle will have their chance to buy.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Arctic is primarily a large body of water that is surrounded by five countries: Russia, USA, Canada, Denmark/Greenland/Faroe Islands and Norway. These, plus Sweden, Finland and Iceland, are members of the Arctic Council. China has an active interest in the Arctic, finally becoming an observer member of the Arctic Council in 2013 after being denied that status twice.*

China has a polar research institute in Shanghai and a 550-foot long research icebreaker, the Xue Long ‘Snow Dragon,’ in operation in Arctic waters. It operates a research station at Ny-Alesund on the Norwegian Svalbard archipelago and will conduct three Arctic expeditions during 2015. Its interest in the region is resources (coal, fish, oil) and transit routes through the Northeast Passage. There is now an opportunity for China to gain an actual land holding on the Svalbard (formerly Spitzbergen) Archipelago in the Barents Sea.
End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)

Source: Emma Jarratt, Barents Observer, <http://barentsobserver.com>, April 30, 2014.

Hot Real Estate in Cold High North

“Across the fjord from Longyearbyen [the largest settlement in Svalbard], with a former mining community and coal mine, the Austre Adventfjord is one of two privately owned properties on the Arctic archipelago. The property is over 217 square kilometers and is estimated to hold over 20 million tons of coal.”

“China is in constant search of coal and other natural resources,” says Willy Østreg, incumbent president for the Norwegian Scientific Academy for Polar Research. “The country could use Svalbard as a platform for a long-term plan for the Arctic Ocean by purchasing this piece of land.” China has long taken an interest in Arctic affairs; often referring to itself as a ‘near-Arctic’ state. In the last few years China has poured more resources and funding into Arctic research and has taken an interest in the effect of climate change on water levels and shipping routes through the High North. “[The] Arctic belongs to all the people around the world, as no nation has sovereignty over it,” said Rear Admiral Yin Zhou to the official Chinese News Service in March. “China must play an indispensable role in Arctic exploration as we have one-fifth of the world’s population.”

With the allure of Arctic access, closer proximity to the latest research and a new source of coal the Austre Adventfjord is a tempting opportunity for China – and other competitive buyers.

China’s 4th Arctic expedition team Xuelong (Snow Dragon) icebreaker from Shanghai
Source: <http://www.whatsonxiamen.com/news13030.html>



Growing Concern Over Terrorism in China Sparks a New Push to Combat

20 May 2014

“In the future China could build elite forces from the contingents of public security and of civil police to crack down on violent and terror attacks, and thereby forming anti-terror forces in multi-level building.”

OE Watch Commentary: Due to another attack in China, recent press reports have been focusing heavily on the country's growing concern over domestic terrorism. Following, are a variety of excerpts from five such reports.

This year China has withstood a series of attacks in railway stations, including an attack that killed three people and injured 79 in Urumqi and another that killed 29 and injured 143 in the southwestern city of Kunming, Yunnan province. In 2013 there were reportedly ten terrorist attacks in China.

The growing number of attacks is prompting China to take a number of steps, including the establishment of a State Security Committee, which is “expected to facilitate top-level design of China's anti-terrorism measures.” China has also just released the first National Security Blue Book, which places a heavy emphasis on terrorism, while also focusing on cyber security and environmental security threats. According to the Blue Book, violent terrorism is one of China's top security threats.

Also according to the Blue Book, terrorism has been taking on new characteristics, due, at least in part, to Chinese overseas interests expanding and strengthening. This evolution requires new defense systems and effective early-warning mechanisms. In such, China has pledged to launch a special antiterrorist operation and use new technologies, including unmanned reconnaissance aircraft, to detect and remove security threats.

The media have also reported on a new elite police force, known as the “Falcon Commando,” which is tasked with responding to any threats of terrorism. In early April President Xi Jinping paid a visit to China's Armed Police's Special Police Academy near Beijing, where he presented a commando flag to the commander of the unit. The Falcon Commando emerged from another unit that

Source: “China Releases 1st National Security Blue Book,” China.org, May 7, 2014, http://www.china.org.cn/china/2014-05/07/content_32309081.htm

Article #1: China Releases 1st National Security Blue Book

The China National Security Research Report says, among other things, that terrorism here in China is taking on new characteristics.

The report says with Chinese overseas interests expanding and strengthening, the risk of China facing more international terrorism is being intensified.

... domestic terrorism in China is being influenced by international terrorism.

“The threats include violent terrorism, employment, social and political stability, as well as environmental issues. But I think the biggest security threats are violent terrorism and social stability, which are of our biggest concerns.”

The new analysis says there were 10 terrorist attacks in China last year.

It notes that terrorist attacks here in China are on the rise, and are mainly targeting government institutions, the police and the army.

Source: “Public Security Authorities Look to Minimize Terror Attacks,” CRI English, May 7, 2014, <http://english.cri.cn/11354/2014/05/07/3521s825238.htm>

Article #2: Public Security Authorities Look to Minimize Terror Attacks

Meanwhile, Meng Jianzhu, head of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, vowed that law enforcement agencies and judicial departments will deploy new technologies to detect and remove security threats.

Violent terrorism is among the biggest security threats for China, says Feng Zhongping, deputy director of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations.

Source: “Anti-Terrorism Strategy Needs Fine Balance,” Global Times, May 8, 2014, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/859113.shtml>

Article #3: Anti-Terrorism Strategy Needs Fine Balance

Following the violent terrorist attack at a railway station in Urumqi on April 30, security has been upgraded in many areas across China. Anti-terrorist training and drills have been organized.

In Xi'an, the first Police Tactical Unit of Northwest China has been established, equipped with unmanned reconnaissance aircraft.

In Shanghai, more than 1,000 police officers carrying revolvers are on street patrol, helping ensure security for the upcoming Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia. Some China observers said that Chinese police forces are “carrying guns for the first time in over 60 years.”

(continued)

Continued: Growing Concern Over Terrorism in China Sparks a New Push to Combat

was created in 1982, whose main mission was to respond to hijackings. Xi's presenting of the flag drew attention from Chinese analysts and media. Li Wei, Director of the Institute of Security and Arms Control Studies at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, believes that Xi's visit to the academy is a sign that the country's "crackdown on terror attacks will become a major part of the reform of China's armed police under the objective of achieving long-term peace," and that "China's armed police will play an even bigger role in the task of helping maintain the state security. It is interesting to note that, according to some China observers, the police forces are now "carrying guns for the first time in over 60 years."

As the situation evolves, it will be interesting to see how China combats this growing problem. We might expect to see a lot more action being taken by the Chinese. As one report states, "In the future China could build elite forces from the contingents of public security and of civil police to crack down on violent and terror attacks, and thereby forming anti-terror forces in multi-level building." **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

The establishment of the State Security Committee is expected to facilitate top-level design of China's anti-terrorist measures.

Source: Esther Teo, "China to Launch Special Anti-Terror Blitz," The Straits Times, May 8, 2014, <http://www.stasiareport.com/the-big-story/asia-report/china/story/china-launch-special-anti-terror-blitz-20140508>

Article #4: China To Launch Special Anti-Terror Blitz

Meanwhile, China's first blue book on national security released on Tuesday warned of a surge in home-grown terrorism. Government agencies and police have become the main targets, it said.

According to state media, the report noted that terror activities are spreading to more regions.

"The penetration of religion into modern Chinese ideology is a great security threat," official news portal China.com.cn said, citing the report.

Source: Zhuang Gong, "习近平视察特警学院 反恐成武警部队首务 (Xi Jinping Inspects Special Police Academy)," Zhongguo Tongxun She, April 10, 2014, <http://www.jnhkcd.com/contents/113/18913.html>

Article #5: Xi Jinping Inspects Special Police Academy

... An anti-terror expert of the hinterland expressed the belief that Xi Jinping's visit sent an important and clear signal that the CPC Central Committee will place the crackdown on terror activities to a priority position in the future work of the Chinese Armed Police Force.

... He (Xi) pointed out the need for the armed police units to "conscientiously implement the CPC Central Committee's decision-making arrangements, firmly and effectively crack down on various violent and terror criminal activities, help maintain state's security and social stability, and safeguard people's living and working in peace."

Li Wei, director of the Institute of Security and Arms Control Studies at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, ... stated ... "There have been very big changes in the security situation in China's hinterland with an emerging trend of terror incidents expanding to the hinterland. In that connection, the CPC Central Committee indeed increases the determination to intensify the degree of cracking down on terror activities following the 1 March terror incident in Kunming. The CPC Central Committee has put forward new demands and raised anti-terror contingent's rapid reaction and terror-incident handling levels."

(According to) Li ... Xi Jinping's inspection of the Armed Police Academy and conferring flag to the "Falcon Commando" were aimed at demonstrating the in-depth meaning that "crackdown on terror attacks will become a major part of the reform of China's armed police under the objective of achieving long-term peace and China's armed police will play an even bigger role in the task of helping maintain the state security."

... "In the future China could build elite forces from the contingents of public security and of civil police to crack down on violent and terror attacks, and thereby forming anti-terror forces in multi-level building."

“When I walked outside, there were dead bodies and bloodstains all over the place, while Vietnamese and Chinese officers were standing around with guns in their hands.”

OE Watch Commentary: After more than a decade of negotiations China and Russia held a mid-May ceremony in Shanghai to sign the final agreement on Russia supplying 38 billion cubic meters of gas annually to China via pipeline. While the first gas shipments will not arrive till 2018/2019, the deal is changing regional energy markets, as well as geopolitical balance.

The first article highlights the economic importance of the deal. The gas to be delivered is critical to supply China with the energy it needs to power its economy. Gas is also a significantly cleaner burning fuel compared to the coal that currently dominates its power production and, consequently, contributes to the country's concerning levels of air and water pollution. Over the past decade China's natural gas consumption has grown by double digits, with 2013 clocking in at 14%. While the Russian gas deal represents 20% of China's current import bill, there is sufficient supply to double pipeline capacity later this decade. For Russia, the deal will make China its second largest gas export market behind Germany and leverages an under-exploited asset in the country's Far East that really cannot go anywhere else. Further, as the EU meets this June to discuss how to wean itself off of Russian energy supplies, supplying China is a means for Russia to diversify its export markets to reduce the potential impact of current and future Western economic sanctions.

The second article elucidates that China's domestic capacity to meet its gas demand is promising, but fraught with technical challenges. Shale gas in the US has massively driven-up US production and brought down domestic prices to the point where gas is displacing coal, and global gas-consuming petrochemical manufacturers are bringing production back to the US. China would like to do the same, as it is even more dependent on foreign oil and gas than the US, with 58% and 32% imported, respectively. Applying large financial resources and similar technology to China's different shale geology is taxing China's oil and gas companies' technical capacities and showing lackluster results.

The third article addresses the dilemma China faces in squeezing greater efficiencies out of its state-dominated economic development model. How can the state continue to exercise control of corporate decision making that underpins its economic power while allowing market forces to find the most resource-efficient path to achieve those ends? The *Caijing* writers propose that, prior to reforming the



Gazprom CEO Aleksey Miller (left) and Zhou Jiping (right), head of China National Petroleum Corporation, ink the deal as Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping look on. Source: Xinhua

Source: “China, Russia Sign Historic Natural Gas Supply Deal”, Beijing Review, 22 May 2014. <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1517296/russia-china-sign-long-awaited-gas-deal>.

Article #1: Russian Natural Gas To Power Chinese Factories and Cities

China and Russia signed a long-awaited natural gas supply deal worth US\$400 billion in a diplomatic boost to show the unity of the two nations. Under the agreement, Russia's Gazprom will supply China National Petroleum Corporation with 38 billion cubic meters of gas annually for 30 years.

Source: “Sinopec Digging Deep in Effort to Take Lead in China's Shale Gas Industry” Caixin, 15 May 2014. <http://english.caixin.com/2014-05-15/100677941.html>.

Article #2: China Shale Is Problematic Resource

China's shale gas reserves are different from those in the United States because its are deeper underground and the conditions are more complicated, all of which make exploitation difficult. “Shale gas reserves in the United States are like a flat plate, but in China that plate fell to the ground and broke and then someone stomped on it again,” said Guo Xusheng, the general manager of a Sinopec exploration subsidiary in the southwestern province of Sichuan.

Continued: China's Trials in Sourcing Natural Gas Supplies

ownership structure of the country's oil and gas companies, the Communist Party of China should develop an appropriate institutional governance model to handle this contradiction of control versus efficiency.

China has other options aside from domestic shale and Russian gas. The fourth article shows that it is willing to confront its Southeast Asian neighbors – in this case Vietnam – concerning control of the energy resources of the South China Sea. In early May and only a few days after the US President toured Japan and the Philippines, China deployed its lone deep-sea oil exploration rig in waters contested by Vietnam. While the amount of gas a single rig can extract is limited, over the long term China may hope to gain advantage in securing all or part of the sea's roughly estimated 70 to 249 trillion cubic feet of gas.

The international political significance of the Chinese-Russian gas pipeline deal is at least as large as its economic aspects because it comes at a time of heightened tensions between energy exporter-Russia and the energy-importing West over Ukraine on one hand, and China's attempt to gain an advantage in the contest to control the waters of the South China Sea on the other. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zandoli)**



A drilling rig stands in lush forest on a mountain in Jiaoshi Town, in the southwestern region of Chongqing. It is conspicuous, towering over the homes of area residents.

Source: <http://english.caixin.com/2014-05-15/100677941.html>

Source: "Oil Industry Mixed Ownership Still Far Off", Caijing, 6 May 2014. <http://english.caijing.com.cn/2014-05-06/114157808.html>

Article #3: Are China's SOEs National Strategy Political Organizations or Economic Organizations

Currently, actual decision-making power at [Chinese] SOEs [state owned enterprises] is in the hands of a [Communist] party group or party committee. Shareholders cannot participate, and there is a lack of procedural safeguards on shareholders' investment returns and investment security. After equity diversification, if an SOE's governance structure operating mechanism only undergoes superficial change, and even if it can attract private capital in the beginning, eventually the investment will be divested, and kept aloof from calls to join SOE reform...in the end, are large state entities like the three major state oil giants that have monopoly control of resources and reflect national strategy political organizations or economic organizations?

Source: "Vietnam PM Urges Nation To 'Defend Fatherland Sovereignty' In Row With China" South China Morning Post, 16 May 2014. <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1513394/vietnam-prime-minister-texts-citizens-urging-defence-nation-amid-anti>.

Article #4: Diplomatic risks grow with China's rise

Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung sent a text message to millions of citizens urging them to act in defence of the country's sovereignty following China's deployment of an oil rig in disputed waters, but said that "bad elements" shouldn't be allowed to engage in violence. The message, sent late on Thursday and into Friday, didn't directly condemn the riots that have broken out this week following China's decision to deploy the rig off the coast of central Vietnam on May 1. Vietnamese patrol ships sent to try and disrupt the rig are currently locked into a tense stand-off with Chinese ships guarding it.

“When I walked outside, there were dead bodies and bloodstains all over the place, while Vietnamese and Chinese officers were standing around with guns in their hands.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 18 April Vietnamese border guards detained a group of 16 Chinese nationals (10 men, 4 women and 2 small children), all of whom were ethnic Uighurs from Xinjiang, after the Uighurs illegally entered Vietnam at the Bac Phong Sinh border gate in Hai Ha district. According to an eyewitness report in *Nông Nghiệp Việt Nam’s* online newspaper, Vietnamese police and SWAT teams, along with Chinese armed forces, cornered and arrested the 16 illegal immigrants after their entry into Vietnam. The report then says a fight occurred when the Uighurs tried to resist detention, and two Vietnamese border guards and five Uighurs were killed, including at least one Uighur who died after leaping from a building.

While China and Vietnam signed an agreement in 2009 to prevent and stop illegal migration, at that time the focus was largely on North Korean refugees fleeing to Southeast Asia, which jeopardized Chinese-North Korean relations. Since 2009, however, increasing numbers of Uighurs have been fleeing China through its borders with Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar and seeking entry into Malaysia by way of Thailand. These Uighurs often seek to obtain documentation to allow them to travel further to Turkey, where they join other Uighurs, who are opposed to China’s policies in China.

China is trying to stop this trend and, as evidenced by this incident on the Vietnamese border, is willing and able to enter Vietnamese territory to interrogate and forcibly repatriate Uighurs leaving China. Because of the possibility of long-term imprisonment and growing number of incidents of Uighur militancy throughout China (and not just Xinjiang), these types of violent confrontations on or near China’s borders are likely to increase. While most Southeast Asian countries will coordinate immigration security and counterterrorism policy with China, Vietnam may be less willing to do so in the future because of ongoing tensions with China in other areas of foreign policy, particularly over the disputed Paracel (Vietnamese: Hoàng Sa) Islands off the Vietnamese coast. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



Vietnamese border guards escorting four women and children from a group of 16 Uighurs, who illegally entered a rural Vietnamese border crossing. source: <https://zh-hk.facebook.com/mooneychina>

Source: “Chuyện Kể của Nhân Chứng [Narratives of Witnesses],” www.nongnghiep.vn, 18 April 2014.

It was lunch break and we finished eating, and suddenly I felt the room was in uproar. I saw they were fighting a group, and suddenly there were gunshots in all of the rooms.

An employee ran out the door, and I looked out the window to see what happened. Not understanding why the commanders fled, I started asking people in the room outside the door if the Chinese group has been involved in a shooting and robbery on the 3rd floor.

At this point, people were hanging out and seeing that the Chinese group should be calmed down, but later there was more gun shots. Then quiet rumbling, and then gunfire. After the shots, everything was smashed, such as furniture, tables, chairs.

Our police and SWAT team, together with Chinese armed forces, managed to corner and arrest the Chinese group, and at around 3.30 it was announced that the incident had ended. When I walked outside, there were dead bodies and bloodstains all over the place, while Vietnamese and Chinese officers were standing around with guns in their hands... My heart was still beating so fast.

Chinese Responds to Boko Haram while Workers are Attacked in Cameroon

20 May 2014

“Nigeria hopes to learn from China’s anti-terrorism experience, enhance cooperation with the international community on intelligence and information sharing, to fight against terrorism and extremism.”

OE Watch Commentary: China’s naval support to Nigeria is already set to increase with the delivery of an F91 stealth patrol ship to Nigeria in June 2014. In addition, as a result of the international outcry over Boko Haram’s kidnapping of nearly 300 schoolgirls from Chibok in northeastern Nigeria, China is joining other countries such as the United States, UK, and France to help find the girls. China announced that its support will include providing Nigeria with satellite imaging capabilities and other advanced tracking technologies.

At the same time, Chinese companies in the Lake Chad region, where the Nigerian, Cameroonian, Nigerian and Chadian borders intersect, are also highly vulnerable to Boko Haram attacks. On 17 May ten Chinese workers from the company Sinohydro were kidnapped by Boko Haram along the Nigerian-Cameroonian border and taken back to Nigeria. The other Chinese company in the border region, a subsidiary of Yanchang Petroleum, which is exploring for oil, will have to rapidly upgrade its security or risk the same fate. Nonetheless, this kidnapping of Chinese workers comes less than one week after Xinhua reported that Nigerian Senate President David Mark promised during a visit to Beijing that Nigeria would protect Chinese citizens living and working in Nigeria. Such promises are evidently easier said than done.

As a result of ongoing insecurity in Nigeria that directly affects Chinese economic interests and Chinese support to Nigeria’s navy and image intelligence collection capabilities, it is likely the military relationship between China and Nigeria will grow in coming years. Premier Li Keqiang’s visit to Nigeria (as part of a trip also including Angola, Kenya and Ethiopia in May) and David Mark’s reciprocal visit to China that same week show that the two countries’ military cooperation has support from the highest levels of both governments.
End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang met with Nigerian Senate President David Mark in Beijing on May 13, 2014, less than week before 10 Chinese workers were kidnapped by Boko Haram in northern Cameroon and taken across the border into Nigeria. Source: <http://english.sina.com/china/p/2014/0513/700062.html>

Source: “Public Security Authorities Look to Minimize Terror Attacks,” CRI English, May 7, 2014, <http://english.cri.cn/11354/2014/05/07/3521s825238.htm>

Nigerian Senate President Vows to Protect Chinese in Nigeria

Nigeria is committed to doing its utmost to guarantee the safety of Chinese citizens and their properties in the African country, said visiting Nigerian Senate President David Mark in Beijing on Tuesday. In an interview with Xinhua, Mark extended appreciation for Chinese Premier Li Keqiang’s recent visit to Nigeria as well as China’s strong support for his country at such a challenging time.

During his Nigeria trip last week, Premier Li assured President Goodluck Jonathan that China will support Nigeria’s fight against terrorism in every possible way, including the training of military personnel for anti-insurgency operations. Li promised Nigeria that China will make available any useful information acquired by its satellites and intelligence services.

“Premier Li’s visit came at an extremely difficult time for Nigeria, which showed China is a true good friend of us,” Mark said. Nigeria hopes to learn from China’s anti-terrorism experience, enhance cooperation with the international community on intelligence and information sharing, to fight against terrorism and extremism, he said.

China Declares Tight Domestic Control is Key to “Cyber-Powerhouse” Aspiration

20 May 2014

OE Watch Commentary: On 27 February General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Xi Jinping oversaw the first meeting of the Central Leading Group for Cyber Security and Informatization. Xi’s prominent role as manager of this group indicates the emphasis that China is placing on cyber issues. Starting this spring, China is embarking on developing what it terms a “cyber-powerhouse,” that is, a nation that maintains firm control over Internet issues and public opinion, and focus on developing and advancing information technology.

One way to maintain control is to improve China’s cyber security. This is a key point of emphasis for China, as it can affect a country’s overall development in areas such as politics, economics, culture, society, the military, and national security. Thus it appears that cyber security strongly influences China’s comprehensive national power (CNP) due to the fact that cyber is integrated into each of CNP’s components in some way.

The recent U.S. indictment of Chinese military officers indicates once again that China is certainly testing other countries’ cyber security. China has been accused by more than fifteen countries of stealing information from businesses and companies invested in national security issues. Interestingly, China continues to state that the nation has only a small number of talented people in the information field. This appears to be the use of the Chinese stratagem “appear weak when strong.” China continues to win international competitions in algorithm writing and mathematics; and its cyber intrusions are well known. **(End OE Watch Commentary. Thomas)**

“Since the 18th Party Congress, especially since the National Propaganda and Ideological Work Meeting of 2013, the State Internet Information Office and Internet propaganda and management offices at all levels throughout the country have earnestly implemented the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important instructions of “grasp online public opinion work as the top priority of propaganda and ideological work,” and exerted firm control over the leadership, management, and right of discourse of online public opinion work.”

Source: Qiushi Online, 1 May 2014

Security is a precondition for development. It is imperative for China to comprehensively enhance the level and capacity for Internet management, establish cyber authority, standardize Internet public opinion, develop a new online information dissemination order, build a “for-the-people, civilized, honest, law-based, secure, and innovative” cyber space, and exert firm and good control over the Internet. China has few leading products in Internet technology and has a small and scattered echelon of cybersecurity and informatization-talent. It is necessary to truly strengthen online public opinion guidance and let positive and rational voices firmly occupy the public opinion high ground in order to keep a firm grip on control and support positive dynamics. We must vigorously launch propaganda to promote trends, themes, achievements, and models, make positive online propaganda quality products that are popular among and convincing to netizens. The remark that “keeping a firm grip on control is the last word while positive dynamics is the general requirement” is unequivocal and in line with reality.

OE Watch Commentary: *As the rift continues to widen between Russia and the West over Ukraine, Russia is increasingly directing its energies and intentions toward the East. The leadership in North Korea hopes to benefit from Russia's pivot toward Asia. As the first excerpt points out, a high-level Russian delegation visited Pyongyang in April, where they discussed broader economic and political cooperation.*

From Pyongyang's perspective, expanding commerce and diplomacy with Russia helps to rebalance its overreliance on China. Historically, North Korea has always tried to avoid a one-sided dependency on just one country, especially on China. Since the end of the Korean War the leadership in Pyongyang has attempted to balance between its two giant sponsor countries: Russia and China. During the period of the Soviet-China split, the founder of modern North Korea, Kim Il Sung, proved to be extremely adept in this balance of power diplomacy.

*The second excerpt reflects (in a typical, indirect North Korean fashion) a key element in Pyongyang's modern balancing act. Russia, like other countries involved in resolving tensions on the Korean peninsula, wants North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program. Given recent events, to include Russia's annexation of Crimea from a de-nuclearized Ukraine, the leadership in Pyongyang is more convinced than ever that nuclear weapons are the ultimate guarantor of state sovereignty. However, rather than criticize Moscow for its stance on a non-nuclear North Korea, the leaders in Pyongyang praise and support Russia's nuclear modernization. Reading between the lines, it is clear that North Korea hopes to follow the same path. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kim)***

Source: "Russia, North Korea Strike Economic Cooperation Deal," RIA Novosti, 29 April 2014. <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20140429/189448913/Russia-North-Korea-Strike-Economic-Cooperation-Deal.html>

North Korea's Foreign Trade Ministry and the authorities of Russia's Amur region in the country's southeast have signed an economic cooperation agreement, the Yonhap news agency reports.

"An agreement on trade and economic cooperation was signed between the DPRK ministry of Foreign Trade and the Amur Regional Government of the Russian Federation," Yonhap cited Pyongyang's KCNA state news agency as saying Monday.

According to the Korean Central News Agency, the accord was signed Monday during the visit of Yuri Trutnev, a Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Putin's official envoy to Russia's Far Eastern Region.

As part of his North Korea trip, Yuri Trutnev met with the Cabinet's Vice President Ro Tu-chol and reportedly shared his views on a broader economic cooperation between the two nations, among other issues.

The agreement between Moscow and Pyongyang is another step towards closer economic partnership in the Far Eastern region, after the Amur territory on China's northern border signed a fraternity and trade deal with Korea's South Pyongan province in 2011.

A similar economic cooperation agreement was signed last week between Pyongyang and the local government of Russia's Sakhalin region.

Source: "Russia Putting Efforts Into Strengthening Strategic Armed Forces," KCNA Online, 27 January 2014. <http://www.kcna.kp>

Strengthening of Russia's Strategic Armed Forces

Russia is putting greater effort into strengthening the country's strategic armed forces than ever before.

Recently, at a meeting, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared that its strategic rocket forces should not only be powerful, but also become a modern force that can beat any missile defense system.

Dmitry Rogozin, deputy prime minister of Russia, said that in order to protect the territory and interests of the country, it had no choice but to rely on nuclear weapons, and emphasized that nuclear weapons were the main factor in intercepting, in advance, provocations and attacks against Russia....

...Even aside from this, the United States has on numerous occasions revealed its position that it would not take any measures that restrict its missile defense system. While it is enlarging its military potential in Europe, it is also pouring massive funds into modernizing its nuclear forces.

Looking at it from the military and geopolitical aspects, this cannot but become a serious threat to the security of Russia. As a result, the Russian Government is taking firm measures to safeguard the country's security and sovereignty....Russia is also turning great attention to work on strengthening aerospace defense forces, in addition to strengthening its strategic rocket forces....

“To support these facts, there are complaints of border guards looting from residents on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The state of the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan is a sensitive subject in the country’s media and, as the accompanying article shows, it continues to be even after a couple of recent reforms. The author mentions progress with the appointment of General Asanbek Alymkozhoyev to the new position of Chief of the General Staff (see: April 2014 OE Watch, “...And a Look at Kyrgyzstan’s Chief of the General Staff”) and an amnesty for deserters, which could be significant since it covers those who deserted in the past several years. Despite these reforms, the author seems skeptical that any real change will take place, and it is interesting that deserters are mentioned as a major problem now, instead of last year.*

*A high profile case of mass desertion took place in early February 2013, when 39 service members from an Interior Ministry unit in Bishkek left their post. In a statement they claimed they were tired of being hazed by their senior officers. All of them returned to their unit within a few days and were disciplined, but not court-martialed. Their case initially drew attention to issues with conscripts in the military and security services, but had largely faded from view until the recent amnesty was declared. Another issue brought up in the article, one that might be a reason for the author’s skepticism, is how border guards have been demanding money from local residents. The article does not specify if the residents are from Kyrgyzstan or a neighboring country, but essentially that Kyrgyz Border Guards are harassing citizens of Tajikistan, such as those who transit Kyrgyzstan to reach the Vorukh enclave. This has been mentioned a few times as one reason for tensions on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. Ultimately, while there appears to be strong support for General Alymkozhoyev, there is not much confidence that changes will take place at a local level. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***



“Kyrgyz soldiers conduct training on the handling of prisoners.”

Source: <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/russia-and-former-soviet-union/deposed-kyrgyz-presidents-brother-flees-detention-123740.html>

Source: Esenkulov, Rysbek. “Кыргызстан: дезертирство из армии как признак слабого государства (Kyrgyzstan: desertion from the army is a sign of a weak state),” 28 April 2014. <http://www.parusk.info/2014/04/28/98228>

Kyrgyzstan: desertion from the army is a sign of a weak state

Progress has finally started in the Kyrgyz Army. Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev signed an order appointing Asanbek Alymkozhoyev Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan... This took place with the declaration of amnesty for deserters who left in recent years. Only one thing is required from fugitives: voluntarily appear at the local military prosecutor’s office within a certain time frame to obtain appropriate documents...

The media have often questioned the horrid conditions of the army... There is considerable evidence of desertion and suicide of recruits... It is worth remembering the published revelations of former soldier T. Yryskeldiyev “...soldiers bitterly told me that instead of training they would spend 12 hours a day picking fruits and vegetables on the plantations of local officials... I was struck that one of the border detachments did not spend a day at serving at the state border, but performed agricultural work...”

To support these facts, there are complaints of border guards looting from residents on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. A number of witnesses say Kyrgyz border guards have blatantly demanded money from local residents for invented violations... While the government does not take the reform of the defense system and the situation in the army seriously, parliament will not write a letter to a single family, districts and cities will refuse to send their sons to a certain death...

“The rocket and artillery ship “Saryarka” came down from the slip at the Ural’s facility “Zenit””

OE Watch Commentary: The “Zenit” shipyard in the city of Oral, Kazakhstan, has built several ships for the Kazakh Navy and Border Guards in recent years. As the accompanying article mentions, it recently completed the “Saryarka” for the country’s Navy. News of the launch signifies more than just the growth of Kazakhstan’s Navy; the article mentions other issues to consider.

First, this is an indication that funding is available for defense production. The article also mentions production on the “Aybar” and that it will come equipped with Adunok (the name comes from an acronym in Russian for “automated remotely-controlled observation-fire complex”), purchased from a Belarusian defense firm. Kazakhstan has been actively partnering with a number of defense firms from several countries, and this represents another example of that.

Another aspect of the ship launch that is worth considering is what this might mean for security in the Caspian Sea and how Kazakhstan perceives threats there. The “Saryarka,” which Kazakhs are calling a rocket and artillery ship, is the third of its kind to be put into service in the Caspian in recent years. This is not necessarily a sign that any tension among Caspian littoral states is causing a build-up of forces, but for Kazakhstan this is an interesting move. Violent resistance from poachers in the Caspian has been mentioned as one of the reasons for arming ships (and some naval or border guard personnel for that matter). Russia and Iran have had the strongest naval capabilities in the Caspian Sea, and there have been a few predictions that the dispute over the status of the Caspian could turn violent, though nothing significant has happened. It could be that Kazakhstan, with an increased defense budget and production, is now simply working to catch up to the capabilities of others in the Caspian. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: Udovichenko, Zlata. “Корабль уходит на границу (The ship is leaving for the border),” *Vremya (Time)*, 7 May 2014.
<http://www.time.kz/news/society/2014/05/07/korabl-uhodit-na-granicu>

The ship is leaving for the border

Another ship was launched in Uralsk, built on order by the Ministry of Defense. The rocket and artillery ship “Saryarka” came down from the slip at the Ural’s facility “Zenit”...the ship can reach speeds up to 30 knots with a cruising range of 1200 (nautical) miles...

According to the director of “Zenit”, Vyacheslav Valiev, the shipyard will launch the fast cutter project “Aybar” in June. The project 0210 “Aybar” is designed to replace the “Burkit” cutters...Additionally, an automated and remotely controlled weapon system “Adunok” will be placed on the ship (Aybar)...

“The rocket-artillery ship “Saryarka” sits partially in the water prior to its official launching ceremony.”

Source: <http://www.uralskweek.kz/2014/05/07/v-uralske-spustili-na-vodu-ocherednoj-korabl-postroennyj-zavodom-zenit/>



“Tajik political analyst and journalist Nurali Davlat believes that there will not be a formal cause for CSTO members to participate in a conflict, because there will not be an open attack against Russia”

OE Watch Commentary: The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) summit that took place in Moscow on 8 May has generated some discussion in Central Asia about the role of the organization and the ongoing events in Ukraine, specifically Central Asian leaders (in addition to political analysts from the region) have voiced concerns about a peaceful resolution to the situation and respect for international law. As the accompanying articles show, some are concerned about what obligations fellow CSTO members would have if Russia were to become involved in an armed conflict and about Kazakhstan's absence from the summit. While Kazakh President Nazarbayev did not attend the recent CSTO summit (called an unofficial meeting because of Kazakhstan's absence), this is not necessarily a sign of Kazakh foreign policy shifting away from Russia. Kazakhstan is still set to sign off on the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (with Russia and Belarus) at the end of this month, and it will participate in “Unbreakable Brotherhood-2014,” a joint CSTO military exercise that will be held this summer in Kyrgyzstan. While Nazarbayev's absence from the summit could be a political statement, it is not likely to hinder other cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia.

The other issue being talked about in regard to the CSTO is what might happen if Russia were to become involved in an armed conflict. This brings up some interesting points about the role that the CSTO and its Collective Rapid Reaction Force perform, and how some Central Asians perceive it. It is possible that the CSTO could be involved in an armed conflict in the event that an outside force (armed forces of another government, terrorist or criminal group, etc.) attacked Russia. The organization's mandate stipulates that CSTO members provide assistance, including military, to any member that is attacked by an outside force. Perhaps the most interesting point made in the article from Asia-Plus is how some members of the



“Kazakh soldiers participate in a joint exercise of the CSTO's Collective Rapid Reaction Force in 2013.”
Source: <http://www.korganys.kz/index.php/en/loadposition-k2/itemlist/user/642-superuser?start=20>

Source: Konstantinov, Aleksandr, Kuznetsova, Olga, and Chernenko, Yelena. “Нурсултан Назарбаев не приехал на саммит ОДКБ (Nursultan Nazarbayev did not attend the CSTO summit),” *Kommersant*, 8 May 2014.
<http://kommersant.ru/doc/2467697>

Nursultan Nazarbayev did not attend the CSTO summit

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) had to go through an informal summit tonight in Moscow. Due to the failure of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to visit Moscow, the event was announced only as a meeting of the President of Russia with his colleagues from Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Nazarbayev was in Astana to hold talks with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns.

...The administration of Nazarbayev declined to comment on the reason for his refusal to travel to Moscow...The main topic of the meeting in Astana was the Ukrainian crisis...on March 27, when the UN General Assembly voted on a resolution of the territorial integrity of Ukraine (which called the Crimea referendum illegal), Kazakhstan was the only CSTO member to abstain...Dauren Aben, a senior researcher at the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies believes that it is not necessary to dramatize Russian-Kazakh relations... “Nazarbayev just a week ago made a working visit to Moscow”...

(continued)

Continued: The Role of the Collective Security Treaty Organization

CSTO do not contribute as significantly to the collective reaction force as others. It is also worth remembering that the current reaction force grew out of a less structured force tasked specifically for the Central Asia region and that (Russian) air units for the current force are located at the Kant Airbase outside Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. This could be one of the first times that CSTO members see a possible threat from an area other than Central Asia.
End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)

Source: Gaysina, Liliya. “Украина делится, Крым в уме (Ukraine is being divided, Crimea is in mind),” Asia-Plus, 9 May 2014.
<http://news.tj/ru/newspaper/article/ukraina-delitsya-krym-v-ume>

Could Tajikistan become drawn into a conflict in Ukraine?

Despite official statements by Russian leadership about the possibility of the CSTO being involved in a conflict in Ukraine, some experts are expressing the opposite view...The first concerns about the possible involvement of the countries of Central Asia through the framework of the CSTO were expressed at the end of March by Tursunbay Bakir uulu, a deputy of Kyrgyz parliament, “I do not want to be hostage to the agreement of the (CSTO) Collective Rapid Reaction Force...If a war between Russia and Ukraine starts tomorrow, we are obligated to fight on Russia’s side...”

...Tajik political analyst and journalist Nurali Davlat believes that there will not be a formal cause for CSTO members to participate in a conflict, because there will not be an open attack against Russia...“If Russia goes beyond the area of responsibility of the CSTO (i.e. sends its forces into Ukraine), there is no country that is required to support this...”...Political analyst Parviz Mullojanov notes that...“military forces of the CSTO are disproportionate: 90 percent of the potential (force) is in Russia, and only 10 percent is divided between other members. Kazakhstan and Belarus have the lion’s share of this; Tajikistan’s forces in this are insignificant...”

A Central Asian Perspective of Security in Afghanistan

By Matthew Stein

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

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

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



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

Following Crimea Precedent, Serbian Municipalities Seek To Join Kosovo

OE Watch Commentary: *In the late 1990s ethnic Albanians fought for their independence from Serbia with military help from NATO, eventually securing the creation of Kosovo as an independent state. Although Serbia does not yet officially recognize Kosovo's independence, the two countries have made considerable progress in normalizing relations. However, some ethnic Albanians living in Serbia now want to use Crimea's annexation to Russia as a precedent to allow them to join Kosovo.*

The Presevo Valley is located in southern Serbia, with a large ethnic Albanian population. Following Kosovo's initial UN-administered independence, pro-Albanian militant groups clashed with Serbian forces in an effort to join Kosovo. However, the Presevo Valley remains a part of Serbia, even though its municipalities have launched several initiatives in a bid to gain more rights, autonomy, or annexation to Kosovo.

This most recent call for annexation by the head of the Bujanovac Municipality was met with condemnation from Serbian authorities. Although Serbia refused to condemn Russia's actions in Crimea and Serbian volunteer fighters may have joined pro-Russian forces in Crimea, Serbian authorities do not view Crimea's annexation to Russia as a precedent to be used in their own country.
End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)

“If authorities in Moscow demand that Crimea join Russia, Tirana [Albania's capital] and Pristina [Kosovo's capital] should demand the same for Presevo valley.”

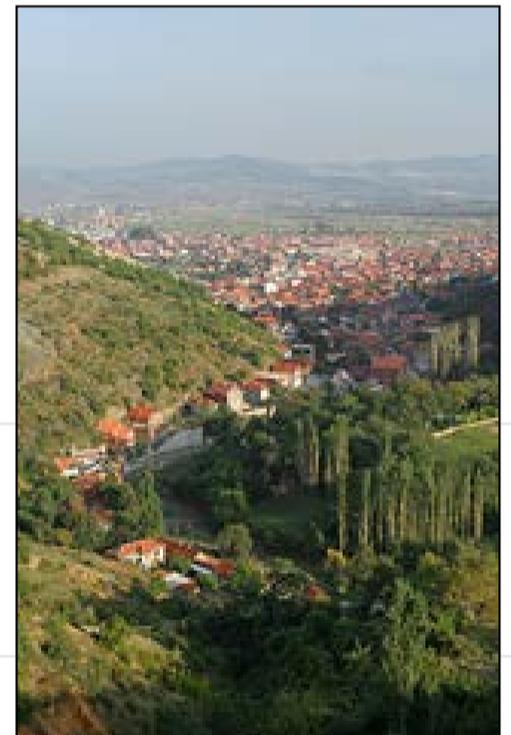
Source: Milic, Jelena. “The EU's Silence Should Worry Serbia.” The EU's Silence Should Worry Serbia. Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, 19 Mar. 2014. Web. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-eu-s-silence-should-worry-serbia>

The EU's Silence Should Worry Serbia

“If authorities in Moscow demand that Crimea join Russia, Tirana [Albania's capital] and Pristina [Kosovo's capital] should demand the same for Presevo valley,” Jonuz Musliu, head of Bujanovac Municipality, was quoted as saying by Serbian radio B92 and CROSS news agency.

Presevo valley, as well as all South Serbian municipalities, Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja, are populated mainly by ethnic Albanians, who form a 90% majority.

Musliu claimed that, at a historic level, Presevo valley has always been part of Kosovo.”



Presevo, South Serbia | Source: Tadija at en.wikipedia

“Both Zagreb and Belgrade have expressed confidence that they will win their cases, but some experts have ... expressed concerns that the court proceedings will sour relations between the two neighbors.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Accusations of blame and attempts at restoration from the past have long played a formational role in relations between Croatia and Serbia. This particular case in the International Court of Justice stems from Yugoslavia’s dissolution, national movements for independence, and the subsequent ethnic cleansing between both Croatia and Serbia. The initial charges were filed by Croatia in 1999 against Serbia for genocide and other war crimes between 1991 and 1995. Serbia responded in 2010 with a counter-claim for genocide and war crimes against Serbs during that same time.*

*Unfortunately, the public, as well as law experts, sees this case as futile in resolving the matter of genocide on either side. Instead, it seems more of an exercise in domestic, rather than international politics. Governing political parties cannot dismiss the trial and risk seeming weak on nationalism, even though Serbs and Croats widely hold little expectation for conviction, fueling interstate tension without resolution. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)***



*Serbian and Croatian flags.
Source: 1389blog.com*

Source: Ivanovic, Josip. “Croatia Rejects Serbia’s ‘Groundless’ Genocide Lawsuit.” *Balkan Insight*. Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. Web. 1 Apr. 2014. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatia-rejects-serbia-s-groundless-genocide-lawsuit>

Croatia Rejects Serbia’s ‘Groundless’ Genocide Lawsuit

“Since the start of this month, Croatia and Serbia have been laying out their genocide claim and counter-claim against each other at the UN-backed court in The Hague.

Zagreb accuses Belgrade of seeking to seize a third of Croatian land during the 1990s war and remove all Croats.

Serbia in response accuses Croatia of committing genocide during Operation Storm, which saw Zagreb’s forces take back swathes of territory in Croatia that had been under Serb control.

... Both Zagreb and Belgrade have expressed confidence that they will win their cases, but some experts have suggested that neither will be able to prove genocide, and expressed concerns that the court proceedings will sour relations between the two neighbors.”

Hungarian Political Party Fueling Ethnic Tensions in Hungary and Romania

28 April 2014

“Romanian President Traian Basescu has asked ... to ban Hungarian “extremist” party Jobbik and its members from the country.”

Jobbik party logo. Source: hir.ma



OE Watch Commentary: *The Jobbik Party is the third largest political party in Hungary and is gaining political support from an increase in negative views toward minorities.*

According to the brief excerpt from the Romanian news site, Romainian-insider.com, the Jobbik Party is a “Hungarian radical nationalist political party whose fundamental aim is the protection of Hungarian values and interests.” As the excerpt suggests, this includes those Hungarians living within the borders of Romania.

This growing nationalism is leading to greater discrimination against minorities, not only in Hungary, but in Romania as well. Ethnic Hungarians living in Romania, supported by the Jobbik Party, are now pushing for greater autonomy.

This political push is creating ethnic tension, leading to violence in the case of the recent rally, resulting in a call to ban the entire political party from Romania.

*The Jobbik Party is using its political support to push a Hungarian agenda, meeting both fierce critics and increasing support. In both Hungary and Romania it is a growing source of political and ethnic tension. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)***

Source: Popescu, Irina. “Romanian President Asks Government, Parliament to Ban Hungary’s Extremist Party Jobbik.” RomaniaInsider.com. 12 Mar. 2014. Web. <http://www.romania-insider.com/romanian-president-asks-govt-parliament-to-ban-hungarys-extremist-party-jobbik/117170/>

Romanian President Asks Government, Parliament to Ban Hungary’s Extremist Party

“Romanian President Traian Basescu has asked the Romanian Government and Parliament to ban Hungarian “extremist” party Jobbik and its members from the country . . . “Their behavior in Targu Mures justifies such a measure against Jobbik,” said the Romanian President.

Thousands of people participated Monday (March 10) at the events organized in Targu Mures to commemorate the Szeklers (Hungarians living mostly in the Szekler Land) killed in 1854 . . . During the events, people also asked autonomy for the ethnic Hungarians living in Romania . . . The rally turned violent when extremists started to push the gendarmes and throw firecrackers, as reported by the local media.”...

...Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary, is a Hungarian radical nationalist political party whose fundamental aim is the protection of Hungarian values and interests.

“...if in time it is ascertained that the “polite folks” were hired, for example, by the official leadership of Crimea, the wide range of international grievances against Russia could be lifted.”

- Oleg Vladykin

OE Watch Commentary: *Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has developed a burgeoning private security sector employing 800,000-1,200,000 personnel, plus an estimated 200,000 people working in the industry without proper documentation. Russia’s gas conglomerate Gazprom’s security service alone employs 20,000. Private security services cover a wide swath of activities, including personal protection, intelligence, counterintelligence, and facility protection.*

Although private security forces are normal in today’s Russia, they have only been used for domestic purposes or for safeguarding Russian industrial interests abroad. Where Russian private security forces have not been seen is on the battlefield. In the Russian military the idea of contractors on the battlefield is a foreign concept; contractors are rarely used as stand-ins for military personnel or state employees. When private contractors are encountered in the Russian military, they are usually found in technical support roles and in the employ of a state controlled company. In terms of personnel on the battlefield, contractors are not utilized, as these functions in the Russian system are reserved exclusively for the state and its employees.

*The accompanying article discusses a new use of private security forces, that of a private army, a major shift in how Russia has previously utilized them. In future operations the successful ruse of “polite green men” used in Crimea and eastern Ukraine may be attempted again, but using private contractors instead of regular servicemen. Private security forces could serve as a useful foreign policy tool to provide a degree of plausible deniability between the Russian leadership and direct action. Among other uses, such a relationship could be desirable when Russia wishes to rile up pro-Russian sentiments in a given area, and then send in Russian peacekeeping forces for pacification, a familiar pattern in Georgia and the Transdniester. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: Oleg Vladykin report: “Era of Non-State Wars. A Private Military Company Has Been Spotted in the Strong-Arm Actions in Southeast Ukraine,” Nezavisimaya Gazeta Online, 9 April 2014, <<http://www.ng.ru/>>, accessed 16 May 2014.

Era of Non-State Wars. A Private Military Company Has Been Spotted in the Strong-Arm Actions in Southeast Ukraine

...Reserve Major-General Sergey Kanchukov said: “A private military company is a registered private high-income commercial entity manned by high-class military and technical specialists which is generally controlled by the state and which operates in the interests of the state, and this is where it is fundamentally different from the classic detachments of mercenaries and terrorists. The private military companies are, strictly speaking, private only relatively because they operate in practice in state interests and pursue the same ends and follow the same plans as regular armies, although they are accorded freedom in choice of means of achieving the end. The findings of American experts indicate that such companies will in time assume an increasingly big role in wars and armed conflicts. We would note that whereas at the start of the 1990s there was just one private operator for 50 regular military personnel, now this ratio has shrunk to 10:1 and is tending to shrink further. More than 450 private military companies are registered and operating in the world today. Through them the controlling state acquires informal and unofficial instruments for the materialization of its interests. The private military company is an alternative to the state where the latter is powerless or cannot act officially. The functioning of private military companies is at the present time not only profitable business but also an effective instrument of a state’s foreign policy...”

A number of experts, incidentally, surmised that those same “polite folks” without insignia who were initially clearly controlling the situation in Crimea and whose affiliation to some official state entity no one has yet been able to determine were most likely units of one or several private military companies. And if in time it is ascertained that the “polite folks” were hired, for example, by the official leadership of Crimea, the wide range of international grievances against Russia could be lifted. Particularly if it is found that those that performed the military operation are officially based on the territory of the European Union and had taken the trouble in advance to ensure serious legal underpinning for their actions.

Now, when a clear precedent for the involvement of private military companies in the Kharkiv events has been created, it may perfectly well be expected that non-state military units could suddenly begin to operate against the private operators hired by the government. It is merely a question of who pays them and how much. So we are entering, it would appear, an era of private

Role, Structure, and Manning of Cossacks Outlined

24 March 2014

Cossack pacifying Pussy Riot Protestors during Sochi Olympics
<http://www.theverge.com/2014/2/21/5432742/meet-the-cossacks-handing-out-vigilante-justice-in-sochi>



OE Watch Commentary: Historically, the Cossacks were known for being the Tsar's enforcers, and, somewhat contradictorily, for being free spirits with a long tradition of resistance to established authority. That said, it seems strange that in today's Russia, a country with a rigidly centralized and authoritarian government, a quasi-military organization such as Cossack units is being formed and utilized today, yet that is very much the case. In 2005 Russia passed federal law 154-FZ "On State Service of the Russian Cossacks," to clarify the Cossacks' legal status, allowing them to form paramilitary units to fulfill limited law enforcement duties.

Today's Cossacks have been accused of several human rights violations, reminiscent of their Tsarist heritage, including efforts to run the Meskhetian Turks out of Krasnodar. Perhaps the most famous recent incident of Cossack activity was the 19 February 2014 incident in which Cossacks wielding horsewhips and pepper spray attacked members of the punk band Pussy Riot, who were attempting to film a music video for a new protest song in downtown Sochi during the Winter Olympics.

The accompanying article discusses possible future roles, structure, and manning of Cossack paramilitary forces. Russia's recent aggression in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine has definitely proved the value of forces that have a less than direct line of command and control to the Russian leadership. Undoubtedly, Russia will find greater use for such units when it wants to project military force with a lighter footprint. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: Dr. Konstantin Sivkov, "New Capacity for the Cossacks of Old. Reconstituted Combat Arm Will Be Capable of Effective Involvement in Ensuring the Country's Security," *Voyenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer Online*, 24 March 2014, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/19624>>, accessed 16 May 2014.

New Capacity for the Cossacks of Old. Reconstituted Combat Arm Will Be Capable of Effective Involvement in Ensuring the Country's Security

In peacetime, Cossack troops are capable of performing an extensive range of missions to support internal stability, and in wartime, following full mobilization deployment, Cossack elements can significantly bolster the forces of territorial defense by assuming the performance of between 30 and 70 percent of missions....

The primary missions might be as follows:

1. Combating sabotage and reconnaissance parties.
2. Destroying terrorist groupings and bandit forces.
3. Involvement in establishing and maintaining special legal regimes, martial law or state of emergency on the territory of a region.
4. Security and defense of installations of significance for the state in the political, economic, spiritual, or any other respect, specifically infrastructure installations.
5. Assisting the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and law-enforcement agencies in the maintenance of law and order.

Analysis of the nature of these missions and the possible ways of accomplishing them indicates that the supreme tactical force element in the new combat arm might be a separate regiment of Cossack troops numbering between 2,000 and 3,000 men... Aside from a separate regiment, separate battalions and companies of Cossack troops can be constituted to perform particular missions in limited areas that do not require a large number of personnel...

An analysis of the nature of the internal threats to Russia's security, of the possible ways of parrying them, of the makeup of the forces that may be assigned to neutralize them from the Armed Forces and MVD of Russia, and also of the limitations imposed by the potential volumes of draft contingents in the military-industrial settlements will dictate the potential overall quantity of permanent-readiness Cossack units in Russia (three to five separate regiments and 15-18 separate battalions), including a certain number of small subunits. The total strength of the permanent-readiness units and subunits of Cossack troops will amount to between 15,000 and 25,000 men.

The second level may comprise subunits occupying an intermediate position among the permanent-readiness units, and cadres belonging to the Ground Troops. These are operational-readiness subunits... Without detriment to economic activity, each Cossack enlisted in the performance of duty missions must spend some time -- two weeks a year, for instance -- as part of such a subunit. Then each of the military-industrial settlements may be able to constitute up to an operational-readiness company, more than that in the largest of them. Across Russia as a whole the personnel of these units may number 40,000-50,000 men.

“The merger of air and outer space into a unified sphere of warfare requires the close integration of the air and space assets – both offensive, as well as defensive. Thus, the aerospace sphere of warfare is becoming a theater of military operations and has a right to an existence equal with ground and naval TVDs.”

- Colonel (ret.) Sergey Pokladkov

OE Watch Commentary: *Russia, as with any large military power, has struggled with how to distribute proponenty and operational control of aviation, air defense, and space capabilities. In the current system the Aerospace Defense Forces (VKO) are responsible for military space operations and strategic missile defense. The Air Force controls most airframes, including helicopters, strike aviation, transport aviation (VTA) in direct support of the Ground Forces and Airborne (VDV), and strategic air defense assets. The Ground Forces control tactical air defense for defense against enemy strike assets.*

*In recent years, most military reform proposals have involved strengthening the combined arms concept by placing strike and/or VTA aviation assets under operational control of the supported Ground Forces or VDV commander. The accompanying article discusses a much different vision of military organizational reform, a vision where a unified command of air, strategic air defense, ballistic missile defense, and space assets is in sole control of offensive and defensive operations in air and space. This command would be placed at a four star level, as are Russia's other theater commands/military districts (OSKs). Given that such a reform would require a massive redistribution of responsibilities in the Ministry of Defense, such a reform would run counter to previous Russian efforts to build territorial, as opposed to functional, commands and weaken the combined arms concept. The prospects of a Unified Aerospace Defense Command may reflect Kremlin concern over this strategically important component of Russia's national defense. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: Colonel (ret.) Sergey Pokladkov, “VKO: Returning to a Healthy Concept: the State's Aerospace Defense Must Create This Work with Traditions, the Experience of Local Wars and Military Conflicts on the Basis of the Requirements of Military Science,” *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer Online*, 19 March 2014 <<http://VPK-news.ru/articles/19533>> , accessed 16 May 2014.

VKO: Returning to a Healthy Concept: the State's Aerospace Defense Must Create This Work with Traditions, the Experience of Local Wars and Military Conflicts on the Basis of the Requirements of Military Science

...The Aerospace Defense Forces (VKO) were created on 1 December 2011, however, since then, the expected merger of forces and assets, intended for battle with an aerospace enemy over the entire territory of the country, has not taken place.. In terms of the VKO Troops, the skeleton of their command structure was created on the basis of the Space Troops (KV) [Space Troops] and this complicates the fulfillment of the missions assigned. Not all officers from this branch of troops are fit to lead the repelling of an aerospace enemy. As a whole the current situation looks pessimistic – the VKO Troops for now are ineffective, and the Air Force has shown its inability to organize the country's PVO [air defense].. .. if all branches of the Armed Forces wage battle with an aerospace enemy, then it is necessary to include strike aviation, the Strategic Missile Troops (RVSN), the Missile and Artillery Troops (RVIA), and even Military-Transport Aviation (VTA) within the ranks of the VKO Troops (or the Strategic Command of Aerospace Defense) involved in the operation.

...The merger of air and outer space into a unified sphere of warfare requires the close integration of the air and space assets – both offensive, as well as defensive. Thus, the aerospace sphere of warfare is becoming a theater of military operations and has a right to an existence equal with ground and naval TVDs. [Since this theater of warfare requires integrated command and control of air and space assets]...Sergeyev proposes to transfer the operational functions of the command of the Air Force, the PVO Troops and the RVSN to a newly created Main Aerospace Command, and put that command at the same level of the Ministry of Defense hierarchy as the TVD commanders...

The aerospace TVD sooner or later will find a rational basis in conformity with the divisions of military science, and it requires serious conceptualization. In particular, and based on such an important field, as interdependence in the theater of war and the optimal cooperation within its boundaries of all three TVDs – ground, maritime and aerospace. We will look at just a few of the partial aspects of this important, demanding great and the scientific development of the question.

Averted Terror Attacks in Dagestan Highlight Russia's Challenge with Radicals

5 May 2014

OE Watch Commentary: In late April-early May the Russian press reported about Russian authorities killing at least four terrorists in Dagestan and averting a terror plot planned for the 9 May holiday (Victory Day) in Russia. These reports once again highlight Russia's ongoing battle with radical Islam in the North Caucasus.

The situation in Dagestan goes back to two separatist wars neighboring Chechnya fought with Russia in the mid-late 1990s. Historically, the North Caucasus republics resisted the expansion of the Russian empire more so than other regions, and their incorporation into the empire was particularly brutal. The break-up of the Soviet Union quickly sparked secessionist movements there, and the battle continues to this day. Despite the Russian government's periodic proclamations of victory over the extremists, deadly terror attacks persist and militant Islam is growing.

Recent Western news reports indicate that the militant resistance in the Caucasus is becoming more sophisticated, recruiting ethnic Russians whom the Russian authorities would not suspect of terrorism and employing other new techniques. Russian authorities reportedly are not adapting to the new realities on the ground.

Typically, Russian news reports about activities in the North Caucasus tend to be terse, similar to the accompanying 5 May excerpts from Rossiyskaya Gazeta (Russian Newspaper), the Kremlin's official newspaper of record, and RIA Novosti, also a state-owned outlet, scheduled to close down soon in 2014 after Russian President Vladimir Putin's decree of 9 December 2013 ordered the outlet's liquidation and replacement by Kremlin-owned Rossiya Segodnya (Russia Today, usually referred to as RT). This brevity and vagueness in the Russian press reports highlight the Russian government's continuing struggle with



Map of Dagestan. Source: Kaukaz.net

Source: Amina Rasulova (pseudonym) "Дагестан: "между двух огней" в ходе спецопераций (Dagestan: "between two fires" during special operations)" Russian BBC, 30 April, 2014. http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/blogs/2014/04/140429_blog_caucasus_dagestan_antiterror.shtml

Dagestan has experienced dozens of counter-terrorism operations (CTO), about which the rest of Russia usually learns from dry news reports about killed "militants."

About what is happening inside the CTO zone, the federal channels are usually silent. How these operations are reflected on the simple inhabitants of the republic who become involuntary participants in these events, and how they evaluate the actions of siloviki, little is known...

Law enforcement officials receive expanded powers to conduct searches and inspections, deliver to police departments citizens who to them appear suspicious, "choke" mobile communication, and block Internet access in the CTO area. The interpretation of the law [on terrorism] allows all of this.

While carrying out such special measures there are often reports of gross rights violations... for example, searches with planting objects (to create a reason for detaining a person) or abduction of persons who are later found in police departments (often with signs of torture), etc. ...

The main problem of Gimry residents is that they are "caught between two fires," as almost every resident of the village has either close or distant kinship with the militants. And it is not accepted to give away one of your own in the mountains of the Caucasus. Even at the request of the head of Dagestan. Therefore, no matter how much Gimry residents may want peace and tranquility, while the confrontation continues, they will be held hostages to the circumstances.

(continued)

Continued: Averted Terror Attacks in Dagestan Highlight Russia's Challenge with Radicals

terrorism as well as a lack of intention to provide more information to its citizens.

The accompanying excerpt from Russian BBC lends additional evidence to this. It is from a blog, written under a pseudonym. It is far lengthier than a typical Russian report about the North Caucasus. The author writes about how little is reported in the Russian press about ordinary Dagestanis' experiences of the Russian government's counterterrorism operations—lack of information, human rights abuses by the Russian authorities, and being involuntarily caught in-between the authorities and the militants.

*Since the Kremlin is unlikely to support reporting such as the Russian BBC article, the Russian public will remain largely unaware of the real situation in the North Caucasus, and will be unlikely to pressure its government to reform its policies. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: Akhmad Dagiev, НАК: В Дагестане предотвращены теракты на 9 мая “Anti-Terrorism Committee: In Dagestan, acts of terror on 9 May prevented” Rossiyskaya Gazeta (Russian Newspaper), 5 May, 2014. <http://rg.ru/2014/05/05/reg-skfo/terakt-anons.html>

In Dagestan, security services prevented a series of terrorist acts that local bandits were preparing to carry out on May 9. This is reported by the Information Center of the National Anti-Terrorism Committee (NAC).

- In different regions of the country caches with improvised explosive devices were found. One cache of 12-pound bomb was in the basement of a private house in the village of New Agachaul Karabudakhkent District, representatives of law enforcement agencies told RG [Rossiyskaya Gazeta].

Another bandit hideout was discovered on a hillside Tarki Tau on the outskirts of Makhachkala...

Source: Группу боевиков блокировали в Дагестане “Group of militants in Dagestan blockaded” RIA Novosti, 5 May, 2014. <http://ria.ru/incidents/20140505/1006551363.html#ixzz30rM5U3SQ>

Security officials on Monday blocked a household with militants in Dagestan's Khasavyurt, told RIA Novosti a source in the law enforcement body of the republic.

“The house in which several members of the underground banditry are hiding is blockaded. Presumably, those bandits who had previously attacked a police officer,” said the agency's interlocutor.

An active phase of the special operation is ongoing...

OE Watch Commentary: *While it comes as no surprise that American and European policymakers have widely condemned Russian President Vladimir Putin's annexation of Crimea and his subsequent actions in Ukraine, another country's support for the West on Ukraine—Japan's—may appear less obvious. Japan has significantly fewer interests directly in Ukraine than does the West. Japan and Ukraine do not share a history of close relations that Ukraine shares with the West. Nonetheless, Crimea's annexation raised serious concerns in Tokyo. The accompanying excerpts provide brief reports on Japan's condemnations.*

In March Tokyo suspended talks with Moscow on easing visa requirements and put on hold discussions on a number of joint projects including investment and space exploration. In April Tokyo introduced sanctions against Russia and issued a joint condemnation of Russia's actions with President Obama.

In recent years Japan and Russia have increased cooperation after decades of strained relations. Yet this change was based on tactical calculations rather than genuine friendship: both sides are concerned about China's rise—for Moscow the issue is China's economic and military growth, as well as encroachment in Russia's sparsely-populated Far East, while for Tokyo the issue is China's military growth and claims of ownership of the Senkaku islands in the East China Sea. These are important bases for cooperation, but Japan is a democracy. Its alliance with the West is based not only on economic principles, but also shared values and the belief that an alliance with the West will ensure Japan's independence, stability, and prosperity. Even as Japan and Russia continue military cooperation, Japan's alliance with the West is far stronger than the recent move towards Russia. Japan is a member of the G-7 and, as the Western democracies within this elite group, supported suspending Russia's membership in the G-8 following its annexation of Crimea.

*Putin's actions were, and are, inherently undemocratic and therefore destabilizing. Indeed, after Russia's annexation of Crimea, Japan began strengthening its relationship with NATO. According to the Ukrinform.ua excerpt of 6 May, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe emphasized that all parties, including Russia, need to recognize the 25 May presidential election in Ukraine. "We consider unacceptable any change in the status quo through threats or use of force. But this affects not only in Ukraine and Europe. This is about East Asia, about the whole world," said Abe. Concern that Putin's actions could have a domino effect in parts of the world closer to Japan could be another reason for Tokyo's condemnation of Putin's actions in Ukraine. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

Source: "Легитимность украинских выборов должны признать все стороны - премьер Японии (All Sides Should Accept Legitimacy of Ukrainian Elections—Japan's Premier)" Ukrinform.ua, 6 May, 2014. http://www.ukrinform.ua/rus/news/legitimnost_ukrainskih_viborov_dolgni_priznat_vse_storoni___premer_yaponii_1630894

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe emphasizes the need to recognize the results of the presidential elections in Ukraine by all parties, including the Russian Federation...

"We consider unacceptable any change in the status quo through threats or use of force. But this affects not only in Ukraine and Europe. This is about East Asia, about the whole world," underscored the Japanese premier...

Source: "Япония ввела новые санкции против России (Japan Introduced New Sanctions against Russia)" Lenta.ru (Ribbon), 19 April 2014. <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/04/29/japan/>

Japan announced on Tuesday, April 29, introduction of new sanctions against Russia...

"Japan expresses grave concern over the fact that Russia's actions that violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including the annexation of the Crimea, continue," said the Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida in a statement. However, he did not mention the last names of people who fall under the sanctions, and did not say directly they are Russian citizens. The Foreign Ministry added that the Japanese list is based on similar lists of the United States and the European Union.

Source: Dmitry Slodorev, "США и Япония изучают дальнейшие меры в отношении России в связи с ситуацией на Украине (USA and Japan Study Further Measures Towards Russia in Connection with Situation in Ukraine)" Itar Tass, 25 April 2014. <http://itar-tass.com/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1146000>

The U.S. and Japan are exploring the possibility of "further measures" against Russia in connection with the situation surrounding Ukraine. This was in a joint statement distributed on Thursday by the White House upon the conclusion of President Obama's visit to Tokyo.

"Together with the G-7 partners, the U.S. and Japan have condemned Russia" for actions during the Ukrainian crisis, notes the statement. The document says that the two sides "closely consult on further measures against the Russian Federation." Its authors call on Moscow "to reduce tensions in the Ukraine." They also express support for "Ukrainian sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic stability..."

OE Watch Commentary: *The ongoing crisis in Ukraine has triggered discussion in the Caucasus. Some analysts and observers have drawn parallels to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The accompanying excerpts show examples of this discussion.*

The first is by Akper Gasanov, in Haqqin.az, an Azeri information, analysis and monitoring portal of the non-profit “For Human Rights” association, a nongovernmental human rights organization created in 2011. Gasanov’s article is a reaction to an event at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington D.C. on 7 May, where Ambassador James B. Warlick, U.S. co-chair of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), made a statement of U.S. policy on the conflict.

The Minsk Group, co-chaired by the U.S., Russia, and France, leads the negotiation towards a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. In 2007 the group proposed one settlement plan, known as the Madrid principles, which subsequently went through several revisions and is still under discussion. Warlick’s comments referred, among other things, to the Madrid principles. His remarks also came five days before the twenty year anniversary of the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh.

Gasanov compares Warlick’s statement to U.S. Secretary of State Victoria Nuland’s visit to Kyiv in December 2013.

She met with the anti-government protestors and “treated them to biscuits and cookies,” writes Gasanov, but in the end, Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed Crimea and escalated tensions in the country’s southeast; the U.S. did nothing to stop him. To Gasanov, Warlick’s statement reads the same way—positive talk that will yield no results .

In the second excerpt, from Armenian blog Kavpolit, Iren Saakyan interviews Armenian experts and ordinary Armenian citizens, and finds that both tend to agree that the situations in Crimea and Nagorno Karabakh are substantially different. For example, Hrant Bagratyan, former Armenian Prime Minister and now National Assembly member, said, “In contrast to the Karabakh Armenians, who were expelled from their homes, the Russians in Ukraine have always been treated normally...”

The situations in Crimea and Nagorno Karabakh are not entirely identical for many reasons. The issue raised in these articles, however, is not about whether or not they are. Rather, it highlights there are publically-expressed perceptions of weakened U.S. credibility and leadership in the region. End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)

Source: Akper Gasanov “Крым и Карабах, как булочка Нуланд и слова Уорлика (наш комментарий) (Crimea and Karabakh, as a biscuit to Nuland and Warlick’s words (our commentary) Russian Haqqin.az, 9 May 2014. <http://haqqin.az/news/21931>

Statement by the American co-chair of OSCE Minsk Group, James Warlick, who spoke at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington and renewed international mediators’ proposals to resolve the Karabakh conflict, caused a loud debate in Azerbaijan...

[W]e see that the U.S. has been unable to achieve the implementation of the Madrid principles. So where is the assurance that the proposals made by Warlick will not remain on paper? How is the U.S. going to negotiate with Russia in the period of increasing confrontational relations between the two powers in light of the Ukrainian political crisis?

After Warlick’s statement, and after that the speech the U.S. ambassador in Yerevan , comes to mind the promising EuroMaidan voyage in December 2013 of the U.S. Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland. She talked with the protesters, treated them to biscuits and cookies And what did we see in the end? Correct, the inability of the U.S. to prevent the annexation of Crimea, and after that escalation of the situation in the south-east of the country [Ukraine].

Source: Iren Saakyan, “Почему Крым – не Карабах (Why Crimea—not Karabakh) 16 May 2014, Kavpolit.com, http://kavpolit.com/articles/pochemu_krym_ne_karabah-1761/

Officially Yerevan is not rushing to comment on the referendum in Crimea. Meanwhile, many have begun to compare the current Crimean campaign to the Karabakh conflict. KAVPOLITOM-interviewed experts emphasize: between the situation in Crimea and Nagorno-Karabakh, there are significant differences. Ordinary citizens of the country agree with them...

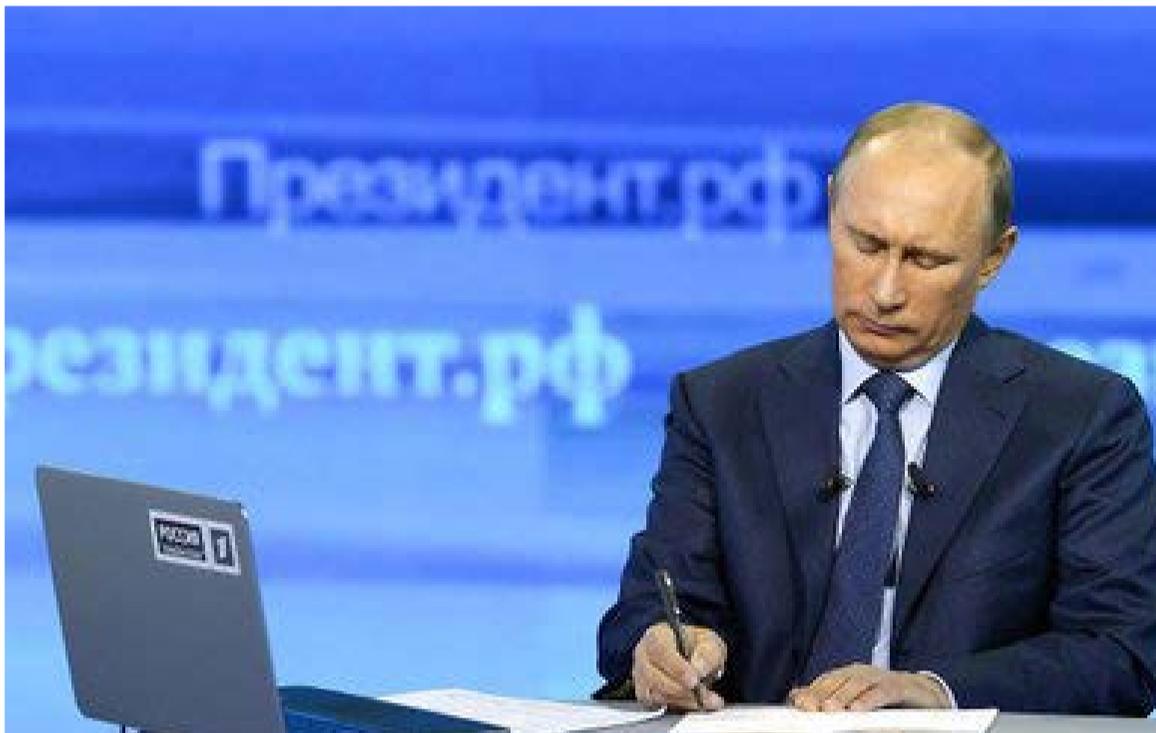
According to [Hrant] Bagratyan [former Armenian Prime Minister, now National Assembly member] recent politicians now and then try to draw parallels between the situation in Crimea and the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. “In Crimea, the situation is different,” the politician said, “In contrast to the Karabakh Armenians, who were expelled from their homes, the Russians in Ukraine have always been treated normally. Nobody evicted the Russians. Russian was considered the official language of the Crimean autonomy. And in this there is a significant difference.”...

OE Watch Commentary: Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 demonstrated not only the discipline of its security forces but also the massive strength of its information arsenal. For the average Russian this operation was portrayed as an Olympic-sized victory, whereby local pro-Kremlin forces in Crimea were assisted by stealthy Russian special forces to secure and defend the peninsula against the illegitimate, quasi-Nazi government in Kiev. The Crimean leadership then held a referendum whereby the majority of the local population expressed their desire to be reunited with Russia. The 24/7 state-sponsored information machine drove this message home in every possible media forum, from early morning radio talk-shows, to magazines and newspapers, to popular Internet sites, to evening TV newscasts and documentaries.

This relentless media barrage (where dissenting voices were labeled as "unpatriotic") illustrates the depth and breadth of Kremlin control over major forms of media. Much of the national media has been co-opted and serves today as an elaborate broadcast platform to proclaim the Kremlin's message. The notion that the press should serve as a "fourth estate," balancing the unchecked powers of the government, has been replaced by the belief that the media must help strengthen and promote the state.

The brief excerpt below describes a closed-door ceremony where President Putin awarded 300 Russian journalists for their "unbiased coverage of developments in Crimea." That this ceremony was held in secret indicates that some of these journalists may have been sheepish about being recognized for their "unbiased" reporting. More significant was the sheer size of the number of awards. As the article points out, after the August 2008 conflict with Georgia only 11

Russian journalists were recognized for their service. Recognizing and awarding nearly a battalion of journalists suggests that the Kremlin understands the importance of wide-scale and unrelenting information operations. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Vladimir Putin
Source: UNK

Source: Dmitriy Kamyshev and Kseniya Boletskaya, "Владимир Путин наградил более 300 работников СМИ за 'объективное освещение событий в Крыму,'" [Putin decorates 300 journalists for 'unbiased coverage' of Crimea] Vedomosti, 5 May 2014. <http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/26101421/za-vzyatie-kryma#ixzz31hqCbsf4>

Putin decorates 300 journalists

Decree № 269 "On conferring state awards of the Russian Federation," according to Vedomosti was signed on April 22, but it is not publicly reported. In the Documents on the official website of the President under the number 268 is listed a decree of 21 April on the rehabilitation of repressed peoples of the Crimea, and then immediately goes to decree number 270 of April 22, about some personnel matters in the Federal Drug Control Service. This means that the decree number 269 is "not in the public domain," explained the press service of the president....

According to the decree, media workers were awarded "for their professionalism and objectivity in covering events in the Republic of Crimea", according to Vedomosti. This award applies to more than 300 people, including about 90 correspondents. This award is unprecedented in scale; recall that after the 2008 events in South Ossetia, then President Dmitry Medvedev awarded only 11 journalists....

...State awards and have a material component. According to the law "On additional monthly financial support to Russian citizens for outstanding achievement and meritorious service to the Russian Federation," will receive a monthly supplement to their pension....

OE Watch Commentary: *As in other countries, the Russian media have a number of “military experts” who attempt to explain defense-related matters to the civilian audience. As the Kremlin has pursued a more forceful foreign policy over the past couple of years, the rhetoric and prominence of some of these military commentators has risen correspondingly. Igor Korotchenko, the editor of the journal, National Defense, and frequent commentator in the Russian media, is a good example of this new brash and aggressive military pundit.*

Korotchenko is an ex-Soviet Air Force officer who served briefly in the Russian military after the USSR collapsed. There is some question as to his actual service record and his official rank when he left the military in 1994. Regardless, over the next decade he transformed himself into a military journalist and editor, writing for a number of different Russian newspapers, to include the military section of Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Independent Newspaper). Today, Korotchenko is regarded as one of Russia’s premier military experts, making frequent appearances on Russian national media.

Alongside his role as commentator and editor of National Defense, he serves as the Director of the Center for Analysis of World Arms Trade and is a member of the Public Council under the Ministry of Defense, where he served as Chairman in 2012. He also maintains a couple of popular blogs which catalog his achievements and where he describes his positions on various defense-related topics.

<http://i-korotchenko.livejournal.com/> or <http://vk.com/id155717119>

Korotchenko has shown a deft ability to successfully maneuver as the Kremlin winds change direction. For instance, he was a strong supporter of the reforms of the previous defense minister (A. Serdyukov) until that minister fell out of favor with the Kremlin, at which point Korotchenko changed his assessment. In this regard, experts like Korotchenko serve as somewhat accurate Kremlin barometers, indicating the prominent (though often unspoken) official Russian position on defense matters.

*In light of this background, the brief excerpt from the state-sponsored RIA Novosti news agency suggests that Russia will likely move to strengthen its relationship with Iran. There were reports in late April 2014 that Russia planned to sell electricity or other goods to Iran in exchange for oil. While this deal might possibly breach the sanction regime currently in force against Iran, Korotchenko argues that, given the strife today between Russia and the West, the Kremlin must “seek new opportunities for the maintenance of global stability” and that “Iran could be a reliable partner for Russia.” He goes on to suggest that the deal to sell advanced air defense systems to Iran, which had been cancelled in 2010, should now be revisited. While Korotchenko is not an official Russian spokesperson, his commentary often reflects the unspoken Kremlin position, and here indicates that Moscow and Tehran could possibly strengthen their relationship in the near future. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***



Igor Korotchenko (far right) with Russian Defense Minister and CGS.
From his blog. Source: <http://i-korotchenko.livejournal.com/>

Source: “Эксперт: Россия и Иран должны начать военно-техническое сотрудничество,” [Expert: Russia and Iran Should Begin Military-Technical Cooperation] RIA Novosti Online, 4 April 2014. <http://ria.ru/>

Expert Sees Iran as Potential Partner in New Russia-West Cold War

...Russia should under the conditions of the exacerbation of relations with the West find new partners in the sphere of world security, Iran could be such a partner, Igor Korotchenko, chief editor of the journal Natsionalnaya Oborona and director of the Center for Analysis of World Arms Trade, believes.

“We are in a state of a return to the cold war between Russia and the West Such an approach forces Russia to seek new opportunities for the maintenance of global stability in the establishment of mutually beneficial trade and economic and political relations with the world power centers.... I believe that Iran could be a reliable partner for Russia,” Korotchenko said at a roundtable at RIA Novosti on Friday.

He believes that it is essential that the countries resume military-technical and economic cooperation in the event of lifting economic sanctions from Iran at the meeting in Vienna. The first step in the cooperation, he believes, should be a meeting of the defense ministers of the Russian Federation and Iran on international security.

...“In the event of a resumption of military-technical cooperation, we should return to fulfillment of the signed contract for the delivery to Iran of S-300 air-defense missile systems,” Korotchenko said.

The contract for the delivery to Iran of five battalions of S-300s (PMU-1 modification) costing about \$800 million was signed in 2007. Three years later, the UN Security Council adopted an Iran resolution, which imposed sanctions on it, a ban on the transfer of modern arms included....

Short-term Ukrainian Defense Minister

10 May 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 there has been considerable speculation as to why Ukrainian defense forces stationed on the peninsula did not put up greater resistance. Pro-Russian Crimean self-defense forces, aided by irregular forces (e.g., Cossacks, bikers, local militia, etc.) and unmarked professional Russian special forces, were able to blockade, seize and establish control over the entire region with barely a struggle. While Russian military planners and soldiers deserve considerable credit, the will of the ethnic Russian majority in Crimea and their overwhelming combat superiority also contributed to the success of this operation.

There were also a number of Ukrainian weaknesses which aided and abetted Russia's success in Crimea. Simply put, the Ukrainian military was demoralized, underfunded, poorly staffed and not well trained. Moscow capitalized on the political confusion in Kiev, where the interim government was distracted by countless other problems. Shortly after former President Yanukovich fled the country (22 February), his government, to include Defense Minister Pavlo Lebedev, was dismissed. By the time the new defense minister, Ihor Tenyukh, was appointed (27 February), the Kremlin had already begun to reinforce key locations within Crimea.

In this brief excerpt from a longer interview, Tenyukh describes the immense challenges he faced during his brief tenure as defense minister (he resigned on 25 March after harsh questioning by Ukrainian legislators over the loss of Crimea). He claims that on 20 February, prior to his appointment as defense minister, he had warned the political leadership that Russia was reinforcing its forces in the region and that Putin intended to seize Crimea. Tenyukh points out that many of the Ukrainian units stationed in Crimea were staffed by residents of Crimea, who apparently paid greater allegiance to Russia, as they refused to use force to stop the seizure. He claims that the previous two defense ministers under Yanukovich (Salamatin and Lebedev) had purged the Defense Ministry of pro-Ukrainian officers. He also suggests that many senior leaders within the Ukrainian Defense Ministry placed personal enrichment above national defense, leaving the military poorly funded and trained.

Tenyukh bemoans the inability of forces loyal to Kiev to crush the separatists in eastern Ukraine, suggesting a lack of coordination among the various government forces and infiltration by pro-separatist factions. He concludes the interview by describing the dangers involved in creating local militias and advocates instead imposing partial mobilization and martial law in those Ukrainian regions which do not recognize the central authority in Kiev. Unfortunately, the former defense minister does not specify which Ukrainian military units will be responsible for carrying out this order. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Former Ukrainian Defense Minister, Ihor Tenyukh
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Source: Mykhaylo Hlukhovskyy, "Interview: After My Dismissal, Lebedev's People Returned to Armed Forces," Glavkom, 10 May 2014. <http://glavkom.ua>

After My Dismissal, Lebedev's People Returned to Armed Forces

...After Defense Minister Pavel Lebedev fled, the post was filled by Ihor Tenyukh, who between 2006 and 2010 held the position of commander of the Ukrainian Navy, which means that he knew the situation in Crimea like no one else. As was revealed soon afterward, that did not stop Ukraine losing control over the peninsula. Within less than a month of assuming the post, Tenyukh was removed from office. Now, many associate the image of the former minister with that of an indecisive army man who during tense situations did not give orders, instead merely accusing soldiers blockaded in Crimea of indecision and lack of professionalism.

In an interview with Glavkom, Tenyukh talked about why soldiers did not follow orders, why Russia decided to return all ships to Ukraine, and what dangers can come from an "apathetic" realization of the antiterrorist operation in eastern Ukraine.

[Mykhaylo Hlukhovskyy, Glavkom] Did Ukraine stand any chance of Russia not invading Crimea, and what would you have changed in your decisions had you had an opportunity?

[Ihor Tenyukh] As recently as 20 February I reported to the country's leaders that in the Novorossiysk and Anapa regions, the Russian Federation is carrying out a redeployment of military-airborne forces, Black Sea fleet vessels are being loaded with military vehicles which are being redeployed from a base in Novorossiysk to Crimea. I was already saying that Putin might be preparing for the seizure of Crimea...

...On 27 February, when I was appointed defense minister, Crimea had already been

(continued)

Continued: Short-term Ukrainian Defense Minister

blockaded. Even before my appointment I emphasized that the Supreme Council should have created a government committee whose members would fly to Crimea, and from there direct the processes that took place on the peninsula. Regrettably, none of this ever happened.

[Hlukhovskyy] The Ukrainian troops in Crimea did not offer any armed resistance. Who gave them the order to defend themselves in such a way: Turchynov, the chief of the general staff, or you?

[Tenyukh] As regards the order to open fire, everything is clearly prescribed in armed forces regulations. In the case of a third person seizing or intending to seize a military unit, the assailant is immediately neutralized. First warning shots are fired, then weapons are used in order to destroy or prevent the persons from reaching the property of a military unit or vessel. And the chief of the general staff, who is directly responsible for this, and I on the very first day gave orders to use weapons in compliance with regulations. And the commanders of military units and captains of ships had all those powers even without the orders.... By the way, the Ukrainian Navy was staffed exclusively by representatives from Crimea. And besides, where were the border guards who allowed the Russian Federation Armed Forces to cross the border? For some reason everybody only pays attention to and talks about the armed forces. Everyone in the world saw the “little green men” casually enter the Supreme Council of Crimea. I understand that at the time the local SBU [Ukrainian: Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukrainy, Security Service of Ukraine] switched sides, but we have other security forces after all....

...**[Hlukhovskyy]** Maybe the Navy consisted of locals, and that was why the men gave up their positions and ships to the invaders?

[Tenyukh] In truth, there are a lot of reasons. I was in Odessa a week ago, I met with officers and admirals. Not as many as planned left Crimea. Out of the 13,000 officers who were on the peninsula, around 2,000 left. The rest took the oath of the Russian Federation, but they will not serve for long....

[Hlukhovskyy] You succeeded Pavlo Lebedev as defense minister. He was considered the Russian Federation’s agent of influence and his actions only confirmed this. What did you encounter in the ministry after his departure?

[Tenyukh] There were two waves of staff purges under [Dmytro] Salamatin and Lebedev. All pro-Ukrainian officers were transferred to different posts. Department directors who worked under Lebedev did only one thing – financial provisions, not for the armed forces, but for themselves....

...**[Hlukhovskyy]** The antiterrorist operation (ATO) in eastern Ukraine has been under way for almost a month. Law-enforcement officials and the military are acting carefully, trying to avoid fatalities among the civilian population. On the other hand, it has been delayed for a long time. Do the army’s capabilities correspond to the complexity of the tasks facing it in the east, taking into account the open border with Russia?

[Tenyukh] Indeed, the operation has been very apathetic. In the beginning of what took place in the east, there were a number of captured buildings and militants, and during the ATO the situation has only worsened. The conclusion is that the ATO has not accomplished its task. There are many reasons for this. There is the lack of interaction between the power blocks that are taking part in the operation. When the first 150 people entered and seized the Donetsk Oblast State Administration over the weekend, they should have been liquidated on Monday. This did not happen, but that is a question for the SBU. As regards the armed forces, then there is also a question regarding checkpoints. If Slovyansk were surrounded, that would mean that nobody could leave or enter the city, but that is not the case. I follow the media who write that out of the seven or eight checkpoints between the cities of Donetsk Oblast, only one of them is a Ukrainian Armed Forces checkpoint. Infiltration from abroad is under way again.

[Hlukhovskyy] But the terrorists can also use these points, can they not?

[Tenyukh] That is why we have special forces and intelligence agencies who are supposed to prevent that. So when the people leave, a cleanup ridding the area of saboteurs, separatists, and the Russian Federation special forces must begin. But as it is, once again we will wait, taking different situations into account. At the same time, separatism is only spreading in Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts. Right now an imposition of martial law is needed in those two oblasts. In that case, the military will acquire many different mechanisms and possibilities regarding how to act and where to shoot.

[Hlukhovskyy] But this will prevent the conducting of the presidential election in those oblasts, or give Russia grounds to pronounce its non-recognition, will it not?

[Tenyukh] It is very difficult to expect that the election will take place in Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts in such a situation. Another issue is that of the independence and territorial integrity of the country. That is why the imposition of martial law is needed in those oblasts. Yulia Tymoshenko created a people’s resistance movement, today they have created a popular front. A lot of fronts are being created. But it is unknown who will give them weapons, who will lead them, what kind of interaction there will be. In order not to create fronts, one needs to impose martial law in those oblasts, and invite everyone to the military during partial mobilization, let them officially come and serve.

“Based on these assessments, the entire business involving a “second front” from Moldavia is a media myth from start to finish.”

OE Watch Commentary: Russia’s recent acquisition of Crimea was widely seen as a way that President Vladimir Putin could regain territory that former General Secretary of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev had given away to Ukraine years ago. However, there was another goal as well, one much more important.

With the acquisition of Crimea, Putin also gained access to an additional 36,000 square miles of the Black Sea to add to Russia’s existing holdings. The 1982 Law of the Sea Treaty allows states to claim waters up to 230 miles from their shores. Some believe the rights to the underwater resources are potentially worth trillions of dollars. More importantly, Russia gained access to the Crimean arm of Ukraine’s national gas company and its exploratory gear on the Black Sea.

Of concern to Ukrainian and Western officials now is that there may be a push by pro-Russian forces to create a land corridor from the Dniester Region of Moldova all the way to Odessa, Ukraine. If this corridor is completed, it would then provide pro-Russian forces (and Putin) with access to all of the shoreline that used to connect Ukraine to Moldova, the Black Sea, and the underwater resources that lay there. This erstwhile second front could be operated in conjunction with the current operation in eastern Ukraine, presenting Ukrainian forces with a two front conflict that would seriously divide their forces in two distinct groups. However, the pro-Russian Tiraspol PMRF website, which claims to represent the Dniester Moldavian Republic Union of Statehood Forces, stated recently that the issue of a second front is not possible, since Ukraine has the Dniester area under control.

However, given the nature of Russian information operations, especially as witnessed in the recent Crimea operation, the use of specific public denial is a Russian IO tool. (End OE Watch Commentary, Thomas)



Moldova’s Breakaway Transdniester region.

Source: <http://www.rferl.org/content/moldovas-breakaway-transdniester-urge-moscow-to-recognize-independence/25351540.html>

Source: Unattributed report: “Sevciuk Guarantees Kyiv...,” Tiraspol PMRF, 14 May 14. <http://pmr-rf.ru/>

A nonstop stream of accusations that the operations of pro-Russia radical groups in Odessa Oblast are being directed from Tiraspol is being leveled at the Dniester Region from Kiev. Refutations and assurances that the Dniester Region lays no claim to its own role in the Ukrainian crisis have been coming from Tiraspol. Then comes 9 May. A large Russian delegation—Rogozin, Medinskiy, Zhuravlev, and others—come to the Dniester Region. Not in fact but in media terms the Dniester Region has since the 9 May parade no longer been a neutral party. The next day, 10 May, Valeri Climenko, leader of the Russian communities of Moldavia, issued an open letter. He presented official Kiev with an ultimatum, setting a deadline of 12 May, after which he promised that he would be unable to hold back his activists... In Moldavia itself Climenko has an ambiguous reputation among his Russian compatriots, his political approval rating is extremely low, and it is not inconceivable that Climenko has embarked on these jumps with a view to the domestic, Moldavian, consumer. So the Ukrainian authorities have no grounds for concern. Based on these assessments, the entire business involving a “second front” from Moldavia is a media myth from start to finish.

China's Stance on Ukraine: An Extended Reach for Balance

Russia's annexation of Crimea has been met with harsh rhetoric and concern, particularly from the West. In response to the incursion the United States has been imposing sanctions against Russian individuals with close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin and core parts of the Russian economy, such as the oil and natural gas industries, which are key areas of Russian exports.

Not all observers are critical, however. In China the reaction seems to be somewhat mixed, although leaning more favorably toward Russia. At the official level China comes across as cautious and impartial. On February 24, two days after Ukrainian protesters took control of presidential administration buildings, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying remarked during a press conference, "China follows closely the political situation in Ukraine... China does not interfere in Ukraine's internal affairs, respects the independent choice made by the Ukrainian people in keeping with Ukraine's national conditions and stands ready to foster strategic partnership with the Ukrainian side on an equal footing for win-win progress."¹

Chinese officials might remain somewhat neutral because of the country's often declared stance of non-interference. It could be, too, that there is a lot at stake for the country. In the case of Ukraine, China is likely treading carefully because it has been investing heavily in land and agriculture in the country. In September 2013 reports emerged about a major agricultural deal between China and Ukraine. Under the deal, China is expected to pour billions of yuan into Ukrainian farmland. The plan will ultimately make Ukraine the site of China's largest overseas agricultural project. In the initial phases Ukraine will provide China with at least 100,000 hectares (386 square miles) and then eventually expand to three million hectares (11,583 square miles), or five percent of the country's land. The project will also provide Chinese laborers jobs abroad. With a lack of arable land of its own, China is forced to seek agricultural opportunities abroad in order to feed its huge population of over 1.3 billion people.

In the case of Russia, China has maintained a special relationship with the country since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, sharing close political, energy, military, and ideological ties. Both countries oppose the spread of Western-style democracy. They also both, through their membership with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), share common interest in the areas of security, economy, transportation, culture, disaster relief, and law enforcement. Since Xi Jinping assumed the presidency in China, their relationship seems to have flourished with a growing commitment from both sides. Xi clearly demonstrated his support to Russia from the start when, after assuming the role of president, he made Russia his first foreign visit. In addition, while many Western leaders did not attend the games in Sochi last year due to criticism over Russia's record on human rights, Xi did.

In April Xi met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Beijing. According to CCTV, Xi said that the two nations "should maintain high-level exchanges and strengthen collaboration in international and regional affairs." Putin visited China in May. Both countries have been conferring on Russian gas supplies for ten years and pricing was expected to wrap up the negotiations. . Li Jianmin, a Russian studies researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, stated that due to sanctions from the West, brought on as a result of the crisis in Ukraine, Russia and China need to have greater energy cooperation. Simply put, the United States is gearing up to become a major exporter of shale gas, which could be shipped to European countries to help break their dependence on Russian gas, a move that could impact the country's economy. In the meantime, China, with its unquenchable thirst for energy, would be more than happy to import Russian fossil fuels, which could put the money back on the table.

Russia and China share mutual respect and admiration. According to Zhou Xinyu, an associate professor at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, Putin is viewed as "tough and cunning," and "brave and crafty," and his positive approval rating in China has soared "just as that of Russia has."²

In turn, Russia's leadership recognizes the importance of strategic relations with its southern neighbor. In an April 17 public question and answer session, Putin described Russian-Chinese relations as "progressing very successfully in terms of trust and collaboration, which are unprecedented." While Putin claims that neither side has raised the question of a military and political union, he states, "We have never had such trust-based relations in the military industry." Both countries began holding joint drills at sea and on land. According to Putin, "This gives us reason to assume that Russian-Chinese relations will be a significant factor in global policy and will substantially influence modern international relations."³

Further promoting the idea of improving ties between Russia and China, Putin pointed out that Russia's trade with China is more than three times than that with the United States. He expects the growth in trade with China to continue to increase, seeing the country as "gradually

Continued: China's Stance on Ukraine: An Extended Reach for Balance

becoming the number one economic power.” While no one can say when it will happen, according to the Russian leader it is inevitable.⁴

When the UN Security Council voted on the Ukraine resolution, China abstained. According to the Beijing Global Times, “The vote reflects the country’s public stance on sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries.”⁵ Despite China not voting against the resolution, Russian sources do not look upon the vote as a move against it.⁶ According to an interview in Echo, China publicly maintains a very cautious assessment on what is taking place. Furthermore, according to the broadcast, China does not oppose Russia’s actions and cites Chinese state-run press reports as saying the West is to blame.⁷

One such Chinese press report blames the West for having interfered in the Ukraine crisis which has “messed up the region and Russia was bound to respond.”⁸ The report goes on to accuse the West of continually making “high-profile provocations,” and that this will not work with Putin. “If they think they can keep squeezing Russia’s strategic space and Russia should grin and bear it, they are wrong.”⁹ The report refers to the situation as an “anti-Russia color revolution supported by the West.”

Zhou Xinyu attributes Russia’s actions in Ukraine to a weakening of the U.S. economy. He explains that Russia has been waiting patiently for the past 20 years, while U.S. strength was at its zenith. Now, however, as the U.S. economy has been weakening, Putin jumped on the opportunity and acted quickly by taking Crimea. According to Zhou, the U.S. “domestic budget for military expenditures has been chopped repeatedly,” making Russia’s timing ideal.¹⁰

Zhou asserts that the West should just learn to accept the situation in Ukraine, saying that the West cannot keep up with a fast acting Russian President Vladimir Putin and must now just learn to “accept reality.”

In yet another viewpoint, some Chinese analysts have claimed that Russia’s taking of Crimea will help to break U.S. hegemony and what Sheng Shiliang, a research fellow with the Xinhua World Affairs Research Center, refers to as “a world order dominated by the West.”¹¹ According to Ren Weidong, an associate researcher of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, the crisis in Crimea is speeding up the “disintegration of U.S. hegemony.” Ren holds that the world is in the process of changing from old to new, with “the U.S. hegemonic system...gradually disintegrating.” He believes that the situation in Crimea is “playing a catalyst role and is of milestone significance in this respect.”¹² Ren contends that the Afghan and Iraq wars have marked a turning point in which U.S. hegemony has started on the downward slope, and that the Crimea crisis has further strengthened this trend.¹³

In conclusion, China has been carefully following the situation in Ukraine, commenting on it, but neither criticizing Russia nor wanting to interfere. Indeed, China may feel that a lot is at stake with its agricultural and other projects in Ukraine and partnerships in energy, military and other areas of common interest with Russia.

It could also be that the situation strikes too closely to home for China. For example, it is concerned about the Uighurs’ desire for self-determination. China has blamed several domestic attacks on the East Turkestan Islamic movement, a Muslim separatist group founded by militant Uighurs who are members of the Turkic-speaking ethnic majority in Northwest China’s Xinjiang Province. Han Chinese have been migrating to Xinjiang by the thousands, causing discontent among ethnic Uighurs. China also fears that Taiwan might one day take steps toward independence. What is good for the goose is good for the gander, and as China sits back and observes the situation in Ukraine, it is offered a glimpse into possible repercussions that it might face should it one day go after Taiwan or seek to “protect” the Han Chinese population in Xinjiang. Hence, if Russia were to suffer no real repercussions from its actions, it sends a clear signal to China, perhaps emboldening it to one day take similar steps toward Taiwan.

While at first glance China might seem to be taking a neutral stance on the issue in Ukraine, up to now the country has clearly favored Ukraine. It will be interesting to see if China maintains this stance, now that there has been a sharp escalation in violence in Ukraine.

Continued: China's Stance on Ukraine: An Extended Reach for Balance

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- 1 "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on February 24, 2014," China Embassy, February 24, 2014, <<http://no.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t1131653.htm>>.
- 2 Zhou Xinyu, "What has Crimea's Joining Russia Changed: The End of the Unipolar World?: The Game Rules Dominated by the West Have Been Gravely Damaged," Guoji Xianqu Daobao, March 31, 2014, <<http://world.ihlnews.com/2014/0331/9640.shtml>>.
- 3 "Direct Line with Vladimir Putin," President of Russia, April 18, 2014.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 "Abstention Conveys Attitude to Ukraine," Global Times, March 17, 2014, <<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/848915.shtml#U16mh00o65Q>>.
- 6 "China: A New Old Friend," Echo Moskow, April 15, 2014, <<http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/sorokina/1300230-echo/>>.
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- 8 "Abstention Conveys Attitude to Ukraine," Global Times, March 17, 2014, <<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/848915.shtml#U16mh00o65Q>>.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Zhou Xinyu.
- 11 Sheng Shiliang, "What has Crimea's Joining Russia Changed: The End of the Unipolar World?: Putin May Continue Changing the World Map," Guoji Xianqu Daobao, March 31, 2014, <<http://world.ihlnews.com/2014/0331/9640.shtml>>.
- 12 Ren Weidong, "任卫东：克里米亚危机加速瓦解美国霸权 (The Crimea Crisis Speeds up Disintegration of U.S. Hegemony)," Huanqiu Shibao, April 2, 2014, <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion_world/2014-04/4946667.html>.
- 13 Ibid.

Global Waves From China's Great Domestic Rebalancing

Since the end of 2013 and continuing into the recent National People's Congress of March 2014, the Chinese government has been embarking upon a comprehensive and multiyear effort to reform the country's economy. If successful, these ostensibly domestic reforms will change its internal power situation, as well as increase its impact on the global economy. The last time China underwent a similar reform drive was in the early 1990s, culminating in China's 2001 World Trade Organization (WTO) accession. In the nine years following WTO accession China emerged as the world's second largest economy and its largest goods trader, manufacturer, reserve currency holder, oil importer, and air and water pollution generator. Given that China is starting its 2013/2014 reform drive from a position of much greater weight in the global economy, the world should watch attentively as the Communist Party of China (CPC) enacts internal changes that by 2020 will significantly reshape the country, as well as the global strategic order.

China's domestic reform package carries the weight it does because it is spearheaded by CPC senior leadership, and the CPC, not the market, is decisive in setting the pace and direction of China's development. While the prices of global commodities (e.g., oil, iron ore, grains) and foreign demand for China's goods and currency set the wider external parameters for China's economy, within China the CPC controls or strongly influences prices for economic inputs like capital, labor, and land. It also manages the distribution of rewards within China, which affects the incentives and behaviors of all economic actors within China, as well as many global corporations that have grown dependent on China as one of their largest and most lucrative markets.¹ It is this control of incentives by which the CPC exercises much of its political power and which conditions the behaviors of foreign firms and some states.²

The current reforms are of paramount interest to China watchers because reforms have historically produced profound ripple effects on the global commercial and strategic landscape. Using its much increased economic power over the past decade, China has effectively forced the established powers to afford major emerging markets, and preeminently China, a greater voice in global trading and financial institutions like the WTO, the IMF, and G20. Chinese President Xi Jinping has supported a reallocation of IMF voting rights and played the global stage provided by G20 summits to call upon the established G7 countries to recognize and advantage China's status as the world's number two economy.³ The governor of the People's Bank of China has also advocated a shift away from the US dollar in favor of using IMF Special Drawing Rights (SDR) as the primary global reserve currency.⁴ China has gone on to create its own regional economic organizations to further and protect its interests. Principal among those China-centric alliance efforts are the ASEAN-China free trade agreement and the Chang Mai Initiative Multilateralization, a proto-Pan-Asia Bank for inter-central bank currency swaps that don't directly involve the IMF or the US Fed.⁵ These economic developments are relevant to strategic planners of all stripes because whether one believes that China's currency attaining global reserve status will help or hurt current global powers, the fact is that in achieving that goal China will alter the environment in which global power is brokered and traded.⁶

Militarily, the financial and technological proceeds of its prior reforms (1990s) have underwritten a 12% annual increase over the past decade in the country's growing military capabilities, placing it one, albeit distant notch below the US in annual security expenditures.⁷ Similarly, changes wrought in the global economic order by Chinese reform have impacted existing alliances, as these networks are founded, in large part, on shared commercial exchange.⁸ China's gains in the first decade of the 21st Century, which saw it become the world's number one importer and exporter, has catapulted it into the number one market for trading partners as diverse as the ASEAN grouping, Brazil and Japan, and even into second place with the European Union. China has proven willing to use its economic muscle to encourage favorable treatment of its interests or punish those who refuse to do so.⁹

Why China Must Reform

China must reform in order to reduce the share that investment represents in its economy and increase both the relative economic share and the absolute amount of personal consumption.¹⁰ Why? In the simplest terms, in order to achieve 10%+ growth rates for the past 30 years, China has burned the economic growth candle at both ends. It took a significant portion of national wealth and plowed it into investments to expand employment and massively increase productive assets like factories (the world's largest manufacturer since 2010), power plants (the largest energy consumer since 2010), cities (160 cities with greater than 1 million persons versus U.S. with 50 and Europe with 23), and highways (China with 85,000 km versus the U.S. with 74,000 km). In many aspects the depth of China's contemporary productive capacity has turned it into the world's factory.¹¹ As succinctly stated by Pei Changhong, director of Economy Institute within the Chinese Academy of Social Science, reform has brought China three core economic advantages:¹²

- **Size of market:** retail goods sales in China surpassed 20 trillion renminbi (RMB) in 2012 (\$3.25 trillion), compared to 2008's 10 trillion RMB, representing 19% compounded yearly growth.
- **Labor force quality:** Chinese workers are generally considered literate, skilled, and non-union.
- **Depth of supply chain:** while little is best-in-class, China produces a range of primary, intermediate, and finished goods that helps lower total costs and improve sourcing efficiencies through efficiencies of scale and scope.

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Through its control of the country's banking system, the government financed the nation's considerable investments largely by repressing both individual earnings and consumer consumption through the management of interest rates that favor corporate entities and urbanites.¹³ Part of the wealth for investment in China originates from earnings on goods sold to foreigners, particularly to Western countries.¹⁴ The other part is financed through domestic debt.¹⁵ However, since 2008 and the fall in overseas consumption due to the global financial crisis, China's exports as a share of the country's gross domestic product have also been falling. This has led China to rely on a rapidly rising debt to maintain growth.¹⁶ Like the preceding East Asian "miracle economies" of Japan and Korea, it is this rapid rise in debt that makes the Chinese model both miraculous and unsustainable.¹⁷

The outstanding success of the Chinese development model over the past 30 years in delivering economic growth endows the current investment-led approach a momentum that is hard to curtail. Those who benefit from the current model have strong incentive to resist change and have a ready historical argument in favor of safeguarding their interests. Whereas 20 years ago there were few rich in China and few dominant companies, now there are many of both. Zhou Tianyong, a researcher at the Party School of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, pointed out that "the government and state-owned companies and banks are taking the lion's share of interests." If additional proof is needed of the impetus for change, as well as the eminent resistance, President Xi was quoted in July 2013 that "China must break the barriers from entrenched interest groups to further free up social productivity and invigorate creativity."¹⁸

Short of a debt crisis, the only brake on the rise in debt-driven growth is government driven systemic reforms.¹⁹ Since the current system's "losers" (e.g., savers and wage earners) are politically ineffective, the burden falls on the CPC leadership to discern that the threat to its rule stems from increasing economic inefficiencies spurred by rapidly rising debt and over-investment.²⁰ The CPC either must engage in difficult reforms or continue with an increasingly unsustainable system that risks a Japanese-style "lost decade" – or worse.²¹ The Chinese government has acknowledged the threat and is embarking on a rhetorical and practical path to achieve such a rebalancing.²² If successful, China's reform of its national development model is a decadal process that will profoundly alter the country economically, socially, and very likely politically. Externally, the country's current role in international trade, finance, and innovation cycles will be driven in new and important directions for the global system.

A Brisk Stroll Through Prior Reforms

The first reform drive was initiated during the 1978 Third Plenum by Deng Xiaoping. Plenums are a year-long series of meetings that constitute the formal process by which the CPC chooses its new leadership and establishes each administration's governing priorities. Third Plenums are wide ranging, but traditionally focus on economic issues and related regulatory conditions.²³ The meetings themselves are not designed for deliberation and policy development, but rather to roll-out what has already been agreed upon months prior behind the scenes by CPC major power brokers. As such, they are the Chinese people's first look at what the country's leadership has in store for them, as well as an opportunity for foreign observers to analyze the international implications.

For Deng in 1978, reform was a direct reaction to the extremes of Mao's Great Leap Forward (GLF). In the early 1970s Mao himself recognized that the GLF had weakened China both economically and socially, but such recognition only led to tempering GLF programs. It took Mao's death and the considerable political weight of Deng Xiaoping to initiate fundamental reform of the CPC's management of the economy – Reform 1.0. Deng's reforms were small scale in focus but massive in their pervasive impact, because they liberated Chinese subsistence farmers and petty merchants from Mao's extremely restrictive rules governing commercial exchange. The reforms cleared the way for farmers to keep some of their surplus production and relaxed the rules against small-scale private enterprise. These reforms brought China out of near autarky and into the global trading system, and were a necessary precursor to the subsequent reform wave of the 1990s.²⁴

After the economic malaise stemming from the 1988-1989 battle with price inflation and the political trauma of Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, the CPC embarked on a second wave – Reform 2.0 – in 1992-1994 as a way to get China's national growth back on track. The main focus of these Zemin- and Zhu- guided reforms was to break China's "iron rice bowl" of guaranteed work within the state sector for all urban residents. By 2001 China had succeeded in radically reforming its business, manufacturing, and banking systems. Thousands of state firms were shuttered or merged, millions of workers were permanently furloughed and forced either into early retirement or into self-employment, and output prices (but not input "factor" prices) were liberalized. Internal and external trade barriers were lowered, and the basic contradiction between socialism and the market economy was removed from CPC programs.²⁵ By allowing output prices to move based on demand and liberalizing where and between whom commercial exchange could take place, the reforms directly contributed to China's history-making investment rates, trade surpluses, foreign exchange reserves, and striking rise in military capabilities.²⁶

Why Reform in China Drives Global Change

Each of China's major reform packages was based on an economic action plan, but its impact has been felt throughout Chinese society.²⁷ Looking only at the economic sphere, the 1990s reforms did away with most product or finished goods price controls outside of the agricultural sector. This freed Chinese businesses to charge a dynamic, prevailing price for their products without concern for arbitrary price floors or ceil-

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ings set by bureaucrats. Inside China, firm-level decision making in setting prices created a dynamic, if limited free market for most finished goods and non-financial services, the result being that in the past 30 years China has lifted 500 million of its people out of poverty.²⁸ This trend has directly contributed to the need for China to import a growing array of raw materials, food, and consumer goods from around the world.

Outside China and especially to Western manufacturers, the ability of Chinese firms to set their own product prices became known as the “China Price.”²⁹ Chinese manufacturers excelled at leveraging their low labor costs, their workers’ hunger for work after decades of failed Mao experiments, and generous government support to successfully sell overseas at prices that were difficult to match by any competitor, developed or developing. By 2013 China became more than just the world’s largest exporter; it also became its largest trading nation, surpassing the U.S.³⁰ The story is well known, but bears repeating, that many Chinese manufacturers started exporting with very low value-added goods and then progressively moved up the value chain.³¹ As evidence of this trend from virtually zero in the early 1990s, the Chinese high technology manufacturing sector by 2010 employed 11 million persons and produced \$1.2 trillion in goods, making it by far the largest global manufacturer.³² The fact that much of this trade is in re-exporting high value components from other countries does not diminish the strength manifest in Huawei’s rise to being the second largest telecommunications equipment manufacturer, Lenovo’s successive purchases of IBM corporate divisions, and sales of Chinese missile technology to Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.³³ These are commercial successes enjoyed by a post-reform China.

As Chinese President Xi Jinping stated while attending the Sochi Olympics in February 2014, “With low-hanging fruit already picked, China must roll out bolder measures in a steady manner so as to rise to the challenges and march forward in the right direction.”³⁴ Therefore, current reforms – Reform 3.0 - are targeted at increasing the role of the market beyond determining output prices and exerting greater influence over input prices (what economists call “factor prices,” e.g., land, labor, capital, energy, etc.). Factor prices are critical to a functioning market economy, since they condition the development of all the various input markets and have a significant impact on a good’s final sale price.³⁵

Throughout China’s modern era factor prices have been tightly regulated as both a means of ensuring social stability and a lever to accelerate or retard the development of economic sectors, based on CPC national industrial policy. The Chinese government’s ability to control factor prices and influence final prices has been central to its version of state capitalism, its export-led growth strategy, and its lock on power within China. It has used this power to reward those who support it and punish opponents. Reducing government control of factor prices likewise diminishes one of the key levers by which the CPC manages Chinese society.³⁶ One can understand the hesitancy an authoritarian regime might have with such factor price reform. The CPC’s willingness to pursue such reforms either is indicative of its lack of concern with the development of centers of economic and political power outside of its direct control or shows just how pressing is the need for reform.

High Expectations for the 2013 Third Plenum

In the run-up to the late-2013 Third Plenum (the Xi Jinping-led Reform 3.0) there were great expectations, both domestically and internationally, as to how the CPC was to lead the economy away from investment-led growth and foster a greater reliance on consumption for China’s economic development.³⁷ While minor political reform was anticipated, change was expected to focus on the economy and touch on core aspects of economic control and price setting.³⁸ Foremost among the expected changes were:

- Increase the market’s role in determining factor prices (capital, labor, natural resources) and a concomitant reduction in state intervention.
- Reduce explicit and implicit government support to state-owned enterprises to allow a more level playing field for private firms.
- Reduce income inequalities and improve access to services, especially for rural Chinese.
- Encourage the growth of the service sector while discouraging continued rapid growth in polluting industries, with the intent to reduce pervasive and hazardous levels of pollution.

The CPC’s reasoning behind these reforms is to lower the rate of investment, increase the proportion of the economy accounted for consumption, and, by so doing, improve the allocative efficiency of the whole economy. The efficiencies are intended to improve the stability of the domestic economy, encourage companies not to invest in hard assets, but rather to improve their soft assets of human capital and technology, and allow Chinese exporters to enter new foreign markets with higher value-added and more competitive goods.

The 2013 Third Plenum and the March 2014 meetings resulted in documents that were less than outstanding in terms of either an enumeration of specific reform measures or in their illustration of the timing of reform. Parsing the phrasing of the final documents is reminiscent of “Krem-linology” – market forces are now “decisive in allocating resources,” while formerly they were only “a basic component.” On the pro-reform agenda, factor prices are to be liberalized, which should increase economic efficiency, but specifics were lacking, as was an implementation timeline.³⁹ Likewise, China’s central bank governor, Mr. Zhou, has been quoted that China will allow interest rates of deposits to be set by the market within the next one to two years. This is potentially important, as deposit interest rates are effectively an input cost to the banking system and its customers.⁴⁰ However, like all the rest of announcements, this too lacked any precision with regard to execution or timing. More worri-

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some is that the state's hand is emphatically not to be withdrawn from state enterprise ownership. Nor will hitherto "strategic" economic sectors be opened to further competition. Nor was there mention of the need to strengthen regulatory institutions, the weakness of which currently undermines the rule of law in China.⁴¹

While the substance of reform is cloudy, it is clear that the CPC is quite serious about freeing factor prices and further unleashing China's productive capacity through Reform 3.0. As evidence, President Xi Jinping has assumed primary responsibility for the entire reform program.⁴² This step is unusual in that the government's economic program is normally entrusted to the Premier (China's number two spot), and exemplifies the degree to which Xi has been able to concentrate power in himself. The words the CPC is using are big, and China has clearly taken the first formal step on a road to changing the CPC's role in the economy and, by extension, how the country does business in the world.

A final issue of importance in anticipating the global impact of China's reforms is an implementation timeline for the reforms. Since the end of Mao's reign China has undertaken a national reform drive about every 15 years: Reform 1.0 in 1978 followed by Reform 2.0 in 1992.⁴³ From observation of the time frame of prior reform rounds, implementation requires about six years to complete from the year of the Third Plenum initiating the reform. The immediate impact of the package of reforms on China's national systems (economic, as well as social and political) then is fully manifested in years 2-8. Based on this historical progression and in the absence of specific timelines from the CPC, it is a reasonable estimate that the current round of major reforms will roll-out in 2014-2019. This still gives the CPC time to announce and implement in some detail the many bold reforms thus far rolled-out only in broad outline. Initial reform effects are likely to materialize in 2015, with the bulk arriving in 2016-2020.⁴⁴ Since the CPC is keenly concerned with political stability, the lack of rapid "shock" adjustment is unsurprising.

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