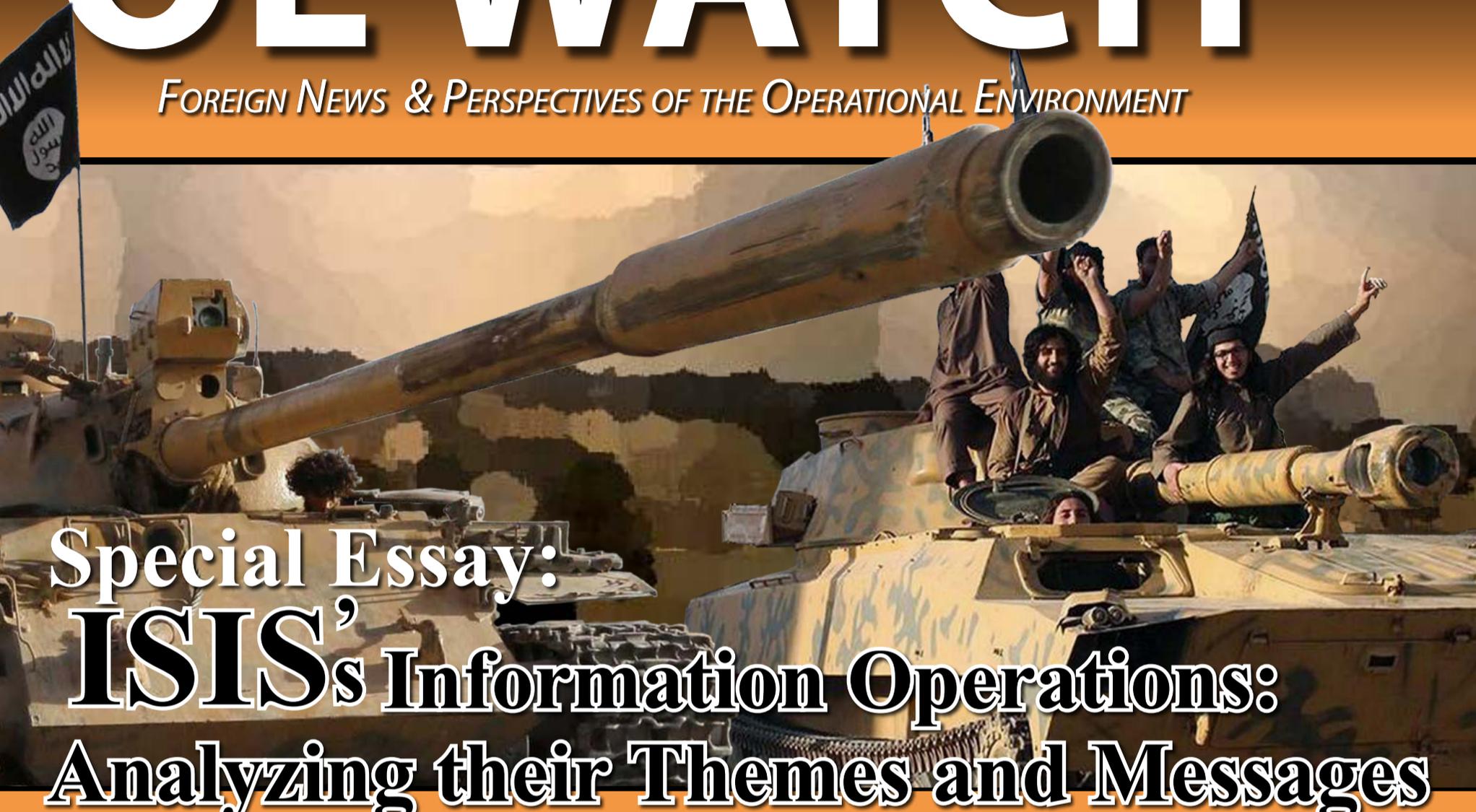


Foreign Military Studies Office

OEWATCH



FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



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NATO to Provide Cyber Defense Training to Allies

12 September 2014

“NATO is moving to a new stage in the fight against cyber threats and attacks.”



OE Watch Commentary: On 4-5 September 2014 leaders of NATO's 28 member nations gathered in Wales, UK, for what has been deemed one of the most important NATO summits of recent times. While most of the coverage of the summit focused on the Ukraine crisis and the ISIS threat in Iraq and Syria, members also focused on countering cyber threats and attacks, which have become one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century.

As the accompanying passages discuss, the final declaration of the summit included an “Expanded Cyber Defense Policy,” which noted that cyber attacks threaten the stability, security and prosperity of the Euro-Atlantic region and threaten modern societies as much as conventional weapons. The first accompanying passage, from the Estonian defense minister's website, discusses that a new NATO cyber training field will be established in Estonia that will provide training to both individuals and cyber defense teams. The second passage, from a Turkish daily newspaper, discusses that Turkey will also participate in the training program and that the cyber threat had recently made its way into Turkey's “National Security Policy Document,” also known as the “red book.”

Countering cyber attacks and protecting the Alliance's communications and information systems have been recognized as a priority in NATO's Strategic Concept, and have been reiterated in the two most recent summit declarations, as well as at NATO ministerial meetings. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

At the NATO summit in Wales, the Alliance took steps to create a NATO cyber training field in Estonia.
Source: <http://securityaffairs.co/wordpress/20705/cyber-warfare-2/nato-attack-response-teams.html>

Source: “NATO Cyber Defense Training Field to Be Established in Estonia,” Estonian Ministry of Defense, 4 September 2014, <http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/en/nato-cyber-defence-training-field-to-be-established-in-estonia>

“At the NATO summit in Wales today, Estonian Minister of Defense Sven Mikser signed a memorandum of joint intent with Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Jean-Paul Paloméros to start preparing for the creation of a NATO cyber training field in Estonia.

The cyber training field is a virtual environment where cyber defense training can take place for positions from specialists up to strategic decision makers. The environment will allow both individual training and cyber defense teams to be trained.”

Source: “Türkiye’ye siber saldırı eğitimi (Cyber attack training for Turkey)” Haberturk.com.tr, 10 September 2014, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/988587-turkiyeye-siber-saldiri-egitimi>

“NATO is moving to a new stage in the fight against cyber threats and attacks. During last week's NATO summit in Wales, NATO approved the “Expanded Cyber Defense Policy” and decided to train allies on [defending against] cyber attacks. Turkey will also receive training from NATO in order to counter such attacks. The cyber threat had recently made its way into Turkey's ‘National Security Policy Document’, also known as the ‘red book’ and related agencies started working on the issue.

The final declaration which stated that fighting cyber attacks is part of NATO's mission, also approved the ‘Expanded Cyber Defense Policy’ in order to fight against this threat which threatens many countries each day. The document stated that, whether a cyber attack applies to NATO's Article 5 (which claims that an attack on one is an attack on all), will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the NATO Council.”

Turkey's Long-Range Missile Decision

12 September 2014

“...Some disagreements have emerged with the Chinese regarding the missile defense systems on the issue of production and know-how.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The accompanying passage discusses an important change to Turkey's plans to co-produce long-range missiles with a Chinese company, noting its decision to move forward with a French company instead. This represents a significant shift in Turkey's technology, engineering and manufacturing plans for long-range missiles.*

On 26 September 2013 Turkey had announced its decision to start talks with a Chinese firm to co-produce a long-range air and missile defense system. The contract was awarded to the China Precision Machinery Export-Import Corp. (CPMEIC), a company that the U.S. had sanctioned for violating the Iran, North Korea and Syria Nonproliferation Act.

As the accompanying passage from a Turkish mainstream daily newspaper discusses, NATO and the U.S. had expressed concern and warned of compatibility issues between the Chinese-made system and the NATO systems. Turkey then moved to keep the competition open to other bidders by requesting European and U.S. bidders to extend the validity of their bids. A final decision was to be made on 30 June. However, on 1 July, Turkey announced that it was extending this deadline until 31 August, suggesting that it was having second thoughts on the Chinese deal.

As the accompanying passage also notes, in early September Turkish President Erdoğan announced that some disagreements had emerged with the Chinese on the issue of production and know-how, and that negotiations were being conducted with the French-Italian “Eurosam.”
End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: “Erdoğan'dan uzun menzilli füze açıklaması (Statement by Erdoğan about long-range missiles),” Milliyet.com.tr, 8 September 2014, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/erdogan-dan-uzun-menzilli-fuze/ekonomi/detay/1936958/default.htm>

“According to reports, [President] Erdoğan made statements to journalists on the plane on his way back from the NATO summit and told them, “Some disagreements have emerged with the Chinese regarding the missile defense systems on the issue of production and know-how... The runner-up France has come to us with new proposals. We are continuing our talks with France right now. Joint production is very important to us.

...Turkey's initial decision to go with a Chinese company under sanctions by the U.S. had attracted criticism from the U.S. and NATO. NATO officials had stated that the Chinese missile system would not be interoperable with NATO systems.”

China HQ-9 (or export version FD-2000) anti-aircraft missile system.

Source: <http://kourdistoportocali.com/post/24099/oi-toyrkoi-agorazoyn-kinezika-antiaeroporika>



Iran Deploys Indigenous Version of Russian S-300...

29 August 2014

“After the Russians reneged on their contract to provide the S-300 system to Iran, our professionals designed and built a long-range missile system with the capabilities of the S-300.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Iranian government has long sought to acquire the Russian S-300, perhaps Russia’s premier anti-aircraft missile system. In 2007 Iran agreed to purchase the S-300 for \$800 million, but under tremendous diplomatic pressure by the United States and other countries, Moscow suspended the sale in 2010, citing United Nations sanctions. Tehran responded by filing a \$4 billion suit against Russian arms export firm Rosoboronexport in Geneva’s International Court of Arbitration. But while the lawsuit remains a minor thorn in otherwise warm relations between Moscow and Tehran, the Iranian government has moved to achieve the same air defense capability by constructing its own indigenous system.*

It is in this context that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has announced a successful test of its Bavar-373, which it openly acknowledges is modeled after the S-300. Khatam ol-Anbia Air Defense Base Brigadier General Farzad Esmaili told the Iranian state-run TV that Bavar-373 had fired a first shot. Esmaili previously claimed that the Bavar-373 would surpass the S-300 in its mobility and air defense capabilities. Such claims may be typical Iranian hyperbole, but Iran invests significantly in its defense industries and Iranian engineers have become increasingly more adept in missile development.

The importance of the Iranian deployment of the Bavar-373, if the report excerpted here is accurate, is that many analysts argued that Israel or other regional countries might consider imminent deployment of an air defense system with the S-300’s capabilities as a trigger to air strikes against Iran’s nuclear program.

End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)



This is the first photo of Iran’s homegrown Bavar-373 missile defense system.

Source: <http://www.presstv.com/detail/2014/08/29/376976/iran-completes-indigenous-missile/>

Source: “Shomareh Baraye Ma’akos ‘Amaliyati Shodan Bavar’,” (“Countdown to the ‘Bavar’ Becoming Operational”) Fars News.com, 29 August 2014. <http://www.farsnews.com/printable.php?nn=13930607000084>

Bavar-373 Becomes Operational

The first pictures of the long-range defensive missile system Bavar (Belief)-373 were released. This is the first time that photos of the Iranian version of the Russian S-300 have been published, and it presents a message to the world that about the self-sufficiency and empowerment of the armed forces and that they can protect the country’s skies. After the Russians reneged on their contract to provide the S-300 system to Iran, our professionals designed and built a long-range missile system with the capabilities of the S-300... In an interview with Fars News, the commander of the Air Defense Command... the construction of the system by the end of the five year plan was announced, and he said, “We hope that with this program, we will have a very good and capable S-300 for our air defense.”

IRGC Chief: Resistance Will Continue until Complete Liberation of Palestine

“Until the complete liberation of Palestine, the resistance will continue.”

OE Watch Commentary: U.S. policy concerns with regard to the Islamic Republic of Iran have been consistent for more than two decades and across administrations. These concerns revolve around suspicion with regard to Iran’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs, Iranian sponsorship of terrorism, and Tehran’s violent opposition to the Middle East peace process. While diplomats hope that the ongoing negotiations with regard to Iran’s nuclear program can resolve one impasse to closer U.S.-Iran relations, the limited scope of discussions excludes questions relating to terrorism and support for armed resistance—a euphemism for terrorism—against Israel and its interests abroad. Nevertheless, there remains hope in many quarters that diplomats can leverage momentum from a breakthrough on Iran’s nuclear program into progress on other issues.

Such hopes might be optimistic if a statement by Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) chief Mohammad Ali Jafari, an article about which is excerpted here, is to be believed. Jafari makes clear that Iran’s goal goes beyond supporting Hamas and other militant groups in the Gaza Strip or simply using them to force Israel to lift its blockade over the Gaza Strip. Rather, Jafari states that Iran, or at least the IRGC, will continue to support radical Palestinian groups until all of Palestine, a region which includes the entirety of the State of Israel, is liberated.

Given that the IRGC is financially autonomous and no longer relies on the Islamic Republic’s official budgetary process, Jafari’s threat must be taken seriously, because the IRGC need not adhere to any deals struck by Iranian diplomats and negotiators who come from outside their ranks. Many in the West may hope that President Hassan Rouhani’s Iran is on the path to moderation, but so long as the IRGC retains a commitment to support groups the United States considers terroristic and embraces maximalist goals and a violent interpretation of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s desire to export Iran’s Islamic Revolution, significant impediments will remain to Iran’s normalization and diplomatic efforts to promote peace, if not reconciliation, throughout the Middle East. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari.
Source: <http://www.islamicinvitationturkey.com/2013/12/13/iran-equips-drones-with-guided-missiles-bombs/>

Source: “Sar Lashgar Jafari: Ta Azadi Kamal Filistin dar Konar Maqavamat Khahim Bud” (“Major-General Jafari: Resistance Will Continue until Complete Liberation of Palestine,”) Resalat, 29 August 2014. <http://www.resalat-news.com/Fa/?code=183310>

Jafari: Resistance Will Continue until Complete Liberation of Palestine

General Jafari, in a message to the people of Gaza and the resistance commanders emphasized that until the complete liberation of Palestine, the resistance will continue. According to a report by the Mehr News Agency, General Jafari said that following the victory of the Palestinian resistance against the army of the Zionist regime in the 51-day war, he issued a message to the people of Gaza and the leaders of the resistance which stated, without doubt, your 51-day resistance will be regarded as a turning point for annihilation of the savage and baby killer regime and all should double their strength and readiness for a prosperous future.

“Iran will never negotiate over its defense capabilities, including missiles for defense purposes.”

OE Watch Commentary: While diplomats hope that negotiations can resolve concerns over the numbers and types of Iranian centrifuges, as well as with regard to inspections regimens and access to nuclear sites co-located on military bases, Western concern over any potential military applications to Iran’s nuclear program has increasingly focused on Iran’s burgeoning work with ballistic missiles that can, in theory, deliver nuclear warheads.

In recent months a broad array of Iranian officials, ranging from Islamic Revolution Guard Corps officers to diplomats, has moved to shut down any diplomatic discussion or negotiation over Iran’s burgeoning ballistic missile program. That Iranian President Hassan Rouhani now, according to the article excerpted here, adds his name to the list of Iranian officials refusing any negotiation over Iran’s missile program reflects both the likely interest among the West to add ballistic missiles to the negotiating agenda and the importance that increased missile capabilities has in Iran’s military doctrine. The Iranian government will also negotiate hard, linking any further nuclear concessions to a strict hands-off approach to Iran’s other military programs.

The controversy also reflects the military tension which will affect both Iran and regional countries even if a nuclear accord is reached. Even if the Islamic Republic of Iran were to pause, let alone dismantle its nuclear program, its emphasis on missile development suggests the Iranian military will continue to pose a growing conventional threat throughout the Middle East and South Asia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Source: “Beh Hich Vujeh dar Khasus Tavan Defa’i va Mushaki Khud Mozakereh Nakhahim Kard,” (“Under No Circumstances Will We Negotiate with regard to Defense and Missiles,”) Fars News.com, 31 August 2014. <http://www.defapress.ir/Fa/News/24634>

Rouhani: We Will Never Negotiate with regard to Defense and Missiles

According to a report by the Fars News Agency based on the information from the website of the republic’s presidency, Hojjat ul-Islam Hassan Rouhani, on Sunday in a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Finland, stated that the Iranian government has sought to negotiate seriously with the 5+1 countries, and said “Today, we are also ready to continue negotiations to reach a final status accord and if the goal of the 5+1 countries in these talks is pressure against Iran to prevent the development of science and technology, then this will not open the way for an agreement.”

The chairman of the Supreme National Security Council, referring to the success achieved in the negotiations leading to the signing of the Geneva interim agreement, and the renewal of the interim agreement, said, “Our red line is the creation of obstacles for scientific research and development of the nuclear field, and Iran will never negotiate over its defense capabilities, including missiles for defense purposes.”

“... Huthi gunmen have come from Sad'ah and other provinces to militarily surround the capital Sana'a ...”

OE Watch Commentary: *The gradual expansion of Yemen's Huthi Movement (Ansarullah) from its stronghold in Sa'dah in the north down to the Yemeni capital of Sana'a appears to be nearing completion. Over the past several weeks the Huthis and their armed supporters have encircled the capital by setting up "armed protest camps" at various strategic entry points. At the same time, Huthi supporters inside the capital have set up protest sites and organized marches, sit-ins and other forms of collective action that have brought key parts of the capital to a virtual standstill. The first accompanying excerpt, from the English-language daily Yemen Times, describes these two different protest camps.*

The marches and protests in the capital are purportedly in response to austerity measures passed in July, which included a slashing of fuel subsidies. Protesters are calling for the government to be replaced, the austerity measures to be rolled back, and the National Dialogue Conference measures agreed upon earlier this year to be implemented. Negotiations between the Huthis and the government, however, failed to produce a breakthrough, and focus turned toward the Huthi armed encampments on the capital's outskirts.

The second accompanying article, from the Yemeni daily al-Masdar, describes the Huthis' rapid military encircling of the capital. It explains how they set up positions in high points overlooking Sana'a while simultaneously establishing camps alongside sensitive government installations. The article also claims that Huthi militiamen began harassing nearby Yemeni army units as soon as the camps were set up. In early September fighting broke out in the southern Hiziaz area between Huthi gunmen and soldiers stationed at a nearby "Reserve Forces" military base (prior to the 2012 military restructuring this had been an important Yemeni Republican Guard base).

The third accompanying article, written by Yemeni political analyst Yassin al-Tamimi, explains the logic behind the fighting in Hiziaz, as well as the broader role that information and propaganda are playing in the Huthi

Source: Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki. "Houthi Camps in the Capital Continue to Grow," 28 August 2014. Yemen Times. <http://www.yementimes.com/en/1811/news/4250/Houthi-camps-in-the-capital-continue-to-grow.htm>

There are daily marches in the streets around the camps, in addition to night festivals crowded with protesters inside the square. While most of the protesters appear follow Houthi leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, the Yemen Times talked to a few protesters in the camps who are members of the General People's Congress (GPC) and support the Houthis' cause... The Yemen Times did not see any weapons being carried openly in the camps within Sana'a. However, in the camps on the outskirts of the capital—which have been growing steadily since being established on August 18—it appeared that every person carried at least one weapon.

Source:

الحوثيون يحتشدون لتطويق العاصمة بمخيمات المسلحين ويستخدمون الجرافات لحفر الخنادق والمتارس
"The Huthis Amass to Encircle the Capital with Armed Camps and Use Bulldozers to Dig Trenches and Barricades," 19 August 2014. Al-Masdar. <http://almasdaronline.com/article/61011>

Huthi gunmen have come from Sad'ah and other provinces to militarily surround the capital Sana'a and build armed camps at several of its entry points, in addition to digging trenches and building barricades in the mountains to the west... The Huthis chose sensitive locations at the capital's entry to set up their armed encampments, to which thousands of gunmen have headed since this morning from the provinces of Sad'ah, Amran, Dhamar and Hajjah.

Source:

إشكالية الانتماءات الضيقة في الجيش اليمني
Yassin al-Tamimi. "The Problem of Narrow Loyalties in the Yemeni Army," 14 September 2014. al-Ahale. <http://alahale.net/article/18199>

The goal of enflaming the military situation around the Reserve Base was to take over the base, though not militarily given that there is no comparison between the tribal gunmen and their limited firepower and the massive firepower and fighting strength of the Reserve Base. According to anonymous sources, the goal was to expedite a plan that was carefully drawn up and which was to be carried out by allies of the former president and leaders within the camp related to the Huthi leader. The surprise visit by the Yemeni president wearing military attire, as was announced in Sana'a, foiled this plan... The Yemeni president faces the major problem of the tyranny of narrow loyalties among Yemen military personnel... on top of that he is currently facing the most dangerous campaign of polarization based on sectarian and regional identities by former military leaders and the Huthis...

(continued)

Continued: The Huthis Encircle Sana'a

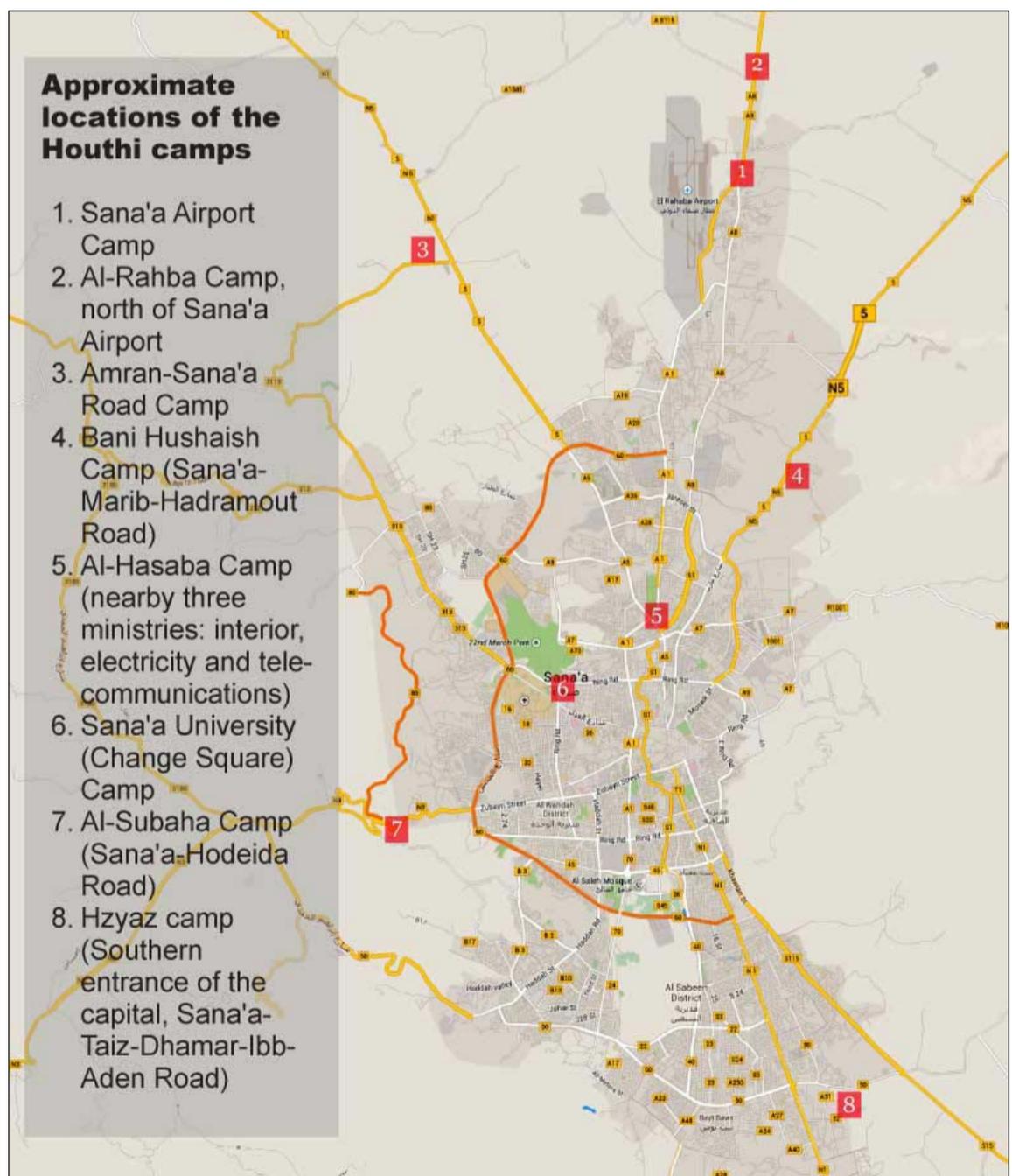
encroachment on the capital. Specifically, the author argues that the Huthis and loyalists of the deposed president Ali Abdullah Saleh are sowing divisions among the armed forces in order to take over key bases adjacent to the Huthi encampments. Several Yemeni newspapers have reported on low morale within Yemen's armed forces, in contrast to what appear to be high levels of motivation and commitment within the ranks of Huthi fighters and their supporters. The Saudi paper, Okaz, recently claimed that the Yemeni military had launched an internal investigation of officers aiding the Huthi cause, as the fourth accompanying article notes.

Although Sana'a is the most important battleground between the Huthis and the government, it is far from the only one. In the key provinces of al-Jawf and Mareb, heavy clashes have been taking place for several weeks between Huthi backers and the Yemeni military and its tribal backers. Additionally, the Huthis continue to control the key city of Amran and are also making a new push to take over the Red Sea port city of Midi. Additionally, the Huthis continue to control the key city of Amran and are also making a new push to take over the Red Sea port city of Midi according to Yemeni media reports. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

النيابة العسكرية تحقق مع قيادات عسكرية متواطئة مع الحوثيين
 "Military Prosecutors Investigate Military Leaders for Conspiring with the Huthis," 16 September 2014. Mareb Press. http://marebpress.net/news_details.php?lng=arabic&sid=102693

Military prosecutors are conducting an investigation of military leaders for conspiring with the Huthis and providing intelligence to the Huthis and the air force which negatively affect the Yemeni state and current authorities and aim to benefit the Huthis on the ground. Saudi newspaper Okaz cited military sources saying that a senior officer in the special forces' intelligence administration is one of the suspected conspirators with the Huthis and that other leaders are under investigation in the hopes of being caught red-handed.



Huthi Camp locations

Source: http://www.yementimes.com/get_img?ImagId=4039

“... Tensions in Deraa have been high following the shootings ...”

OE Watch Commentary: In early August several of Syria's armed rebel groups formed an ideologically neutral coalition called the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). All major factions this side of the Islamic State (IS) joined, with two exceptions: Ahrar al-Sham and Jabhat al-Nusra (JN). Over the following weeks Ahrar al-Sham leaders endorsed the RCC and seemed poised to join it in full. On 9 September its top leaders met in what they believed was a secure location to make a final decision in this regard. A bomb containing chemical agents was detonated during the meeting, killing all but one of the several dozen attendees and, in doing so, wiping out most of the group's top two tiers of leadership. Ahrar al-Sham's days as a dominant group have likely ended, with fragmentation the most likely scenario. The future of JN, which showed no interest in joining the RCC, is less clear.

The first half of 2014 was a rough one for JN, as it was expelled from Deir Ezzour, along the Iraqi border, by the IS and defeated by the Syrian military and Hizbullah in the Qalamoun Mountains, along the Lebanese border. Tensions between it and other rebel groups increased, particularly in Idlib, where a strong JN contingent uneasily coexisted with groups linked to the Syrian Revolutionaries Front (SRF). An ill-conceived August offensive against government positions and loyalist areas (including the Christian town of Mhardeh) in the Hama countryside, allegedly involving JN leader Mohammed al-Jolani, ended in defeat and withdrawal. Not until late August did a bright spot emerge, when JN fighters teamed up with Islamist and secular militias from Daraa Province to attack Syrian military positions in southern Quneitra Province, along the border with Israel. The temporary capture of dozens of Fijian peacekeepers, followed by rebel seizure of a border crossing, suddenly thrust JN back into the international media spotlight.

A previous OE Watch entry from the early summer of 2014 (http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/OEWatch/201406/MiddleEast_06.html) described a looming conflict in Daraa between JN and FSA-linked groups. The situation remained tense over the summer, which is why the sudden collaboration in Quneitra caught many observers by surprise, as noted in the first accompanying article.

On 28 August, merely a day after the coordinated rebel attack on Quneitra began, Syrian opposition groups in Daraa Province were jolted by news that an argument in the village of Jilleen between two prominent rebel figures from the province had devolved into a gunfight with fatal consequences. Qays al-Qataneh, one of the first Syrian soldiers to publicly defect from the regime and Daraa's first FSA commander,



Qaysar habib from his facebook page. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1474715106114324&set=p.1474715106114324&type=1>

Source:

Tareq al-Abd. “Al-Nusra Advances in Quneitra,” 28 August 2014. Al-Safir. <http://www.assafir.com/Article/1/368871> (translation via: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/08/syria-army-armed-groups-unified-quneitra-golan.html>)

تقدم لـ«النصرة» في القنيطرة

The source was surprised by the participation of Islamic factions in the battle, since they were absent for months from the fighting in the southern region, especially in Daraa, before simultaneously deciding to participate alongside the Syria Revolutionaries Front, its most bitter enemy. “All this comes in conjunction with the relative calm in the Houran area, which is no longer witnessing any military operations, with the exception of an ambush by the army a few days ago, killing dozens of militants,” the source said.

Source: Suha Maayeh and Phil Sands. “Gunfight shows demise of moderates on Syria's southern front,” 2 September 2014. The National (UAE). <http://www.thenational.ae/world/syria/gunfight-shows-demise-of-moderates-on-syrias-southern-front#full>

Tensions in Deraa have been high following the shootings, with new checkpoints set up by rebel units in parts of the province, including Tal Shehab, a district 12 kilometres north-west of Deraa city, to prevent clashes between members of the men's tribes and supporting rebel factions.

(continued)

Continued: Jabhat al-Nusra: Convulsions, Resurgence or Transformation?

was killed in the spat. Leadership of his “Omari Brigade,” which had grown into a large and well armed unit, a model “moderate” rebel group of the type the Syrian diaspora held up as a beacon of hope for the Syrian revolution (and also part of the Idlib-based SRF), passed on to one of his nephews. Al-Qataneh’s unlikely killer was Mahmoud Hashish, a young media activist from the town of Tal Shihab. Hashish went by the nom de plume of Qaysar Habib and was an ardent supporter of the armed rebels, tirelessly documenting their exploits. He regularly reported on events in Daraa for the most prominent Arabic-language media channels. Over the summer, Habib had uploaded videos of himself alongside JN units as they took over Syrian military positions in Quneitra Province and western Daraa, leading some to accuse him of having joined that organization.

The second accompanying article is taken from Hizbullah’s al-Manar media outlet. It argues that, in addition to being an altercation in a lawless land, the gunfight was the product of a tense atmosphere of mutual recriminations between al-Nusra and other rebel groups. The incident does not bode well for the unity of rebel factions in this all-important and oft-overlooked part of Syria, as the third accompanying excerpt notes. Al-Qataneh’s backers are calling for Habib to be handed over to a Shari’a court for trial; according to some reports, his relatives (al-Qataneh hailed from a Bedouin family in Daraa’s al-Lajat region) have intimated that if this does not occur they will exact revenge. Habib, a member of the Shammar tribe from the town of Tal Shihab, has meanwhile taken refuge with Mohammed Saad el-Din al-Buraidi, leader of the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade.

In mid-September members of JN attacked a base in Muzayrib (western Daraa Province) belonging to the Fallujah Hawran Brigade, a powerful and long-established rebel group hailing from al-Na’ima on the outskirts of Daraa. The fourth accompanying article excerpts the official statement made by the brigade regarding the clashes. Daraa is beginning to look like a hornet’s nest; if poked in the wrong way it could easily become a new battleground for inter-rebel fighting of the type not seen since rebel factions turned on the IS in early 2014. The IS, which has thus far been absent from the Daraa scene, thrives under such conditions, as many have now learned. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



Qays al-Qataneh: screenshot from defection video (July 2011)
Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKw9llHLUu0>

Source:

هل يُقرَّب قتل “القطاعة” الحرب بين مسلحي درعا..؟

Hussein Maleh. “Will al-Qataneh’s Killing Precipitate the War between Daraa’s Militias?” 29 August 2014. Al-Manar. <http://www.almanar.com.lb/adetails.php?eid=950167&cid=21&fromval=1&frid=21&seccatid=23&s1=1>

... Syrian sources place the killing of al-Qataneh in the context of the months-long fight between Jabhat al-Nusra and the so-called “Free Syrian Army” and “Syrian Revolutionaries Front” and the ongoing mutual accusations between the groups about who is stealing funds from humanitarian assistance and the sale of local crops... Thus it seems that the killing of al-Qataneh is another episode in the “war of assassinations” between al-Nusra and the SRF. The former is worried that armed groups will expand at its expense in Daraa in accordance with a Jordanian-Saudi-American plan to provide assistance to groups opposed to al-Nusra, whose presence on the Syria-Jordan border worries Amman...

Source:

بيان هام صادر عن قيادة لواء فلوحة حوران

“Important Statement Issued by the Fallujah Hawran Brigade Leadership,” 18 September 2014. Liwa Fallujah Hawran Facebook Page. <https://www.facebook.com/looa.filojet.horan/photos/a.326382517543784.1073741828.325249554323747/326380907543945/?type=1>

A Jabhat al-Nusra group attacked one of the Falluja Hawran Brigades HQs in Muzayrib. Clashes ensued between fighters at the HQ and Jabhat al-Nusra which led to the martyrdom of one of the Brigades’ fighters, Ilyas Jabber al-Hashim, and the injury of three others... we request an immediate clarification from Jabhat al-Nusra on the reason for this dishonorable attack and to make efforts to hold accountable those who carried it out. We will in no way put up with attacks against our bases...

“... Under the scorching Saudi sands, the sleeping knives of ISIS await...”

OE Watch Commentary: A battle for the soul of Wahhabism, if such a thing exists, has broken out between the Islamic State (IS) and the Saudi religious establishment. In a 19 August speech Saudi Arabia's Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Sheikh called IS the “enemy number one” of Islam. The IS Twitter Army quickly shot back, accusing the Saudi Wahhabi establishment of apostasy (ridda) and other transgressions. This scene, Saudi author and political activist Fouad Ibrahim argues in the first accompanying article, should be understood as the latest manifestation of conflict between the House of Saud and its Wahhabi popular base. He argues that IS ideology “is not different from the ideology of any Jihadi Salafi or Awakening organization.”

The last time the Saudi establishment faced a similar threat, Ibrahim explains, was in 1979, when Wahhabi fundamentalists led by Juhayman al-Otaibi temporarily took over the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Are Saudi authorities bracing for a similar scenario? The political editor of al-Bina, the mouthpiece of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, claims that the West and its allies are concerned about an IS plan to take over Mecca and Medina during the upcoming Hajj and Eid al-Adha period in early October. This threat, the author argues, is forcing Saudi Arabia to cooperate with Syrian authorities in order to contain the IS threat.

The IS is a double-edge sword for Saudi Arabia, as Jamal Khashoggi, the influential columnist for Saudi Arabia's al-Hayat newspaper, explains in the third accompanying article. Although IS poses a clear threat to the Saudi state, Khashoggi believes that Saudi policy should deal with the threat in a way that does not strategically benefit Iran. After all, the IS has driven a wedge across the “Shi'a Crescent” and cut the Syrian government off from its Iranian ally. For him, Saudi authorities should focus on the internal front, which is where IS can do the greatest damage. Yet it is precisely this absence of any clear offensive policy to deal with IS which is putting Saudi Arabia in a precarious position, at least according to the fourth accompanying article, from the Lebanese daily al-Safir. This means, per the article, that the final battle between the two will occur on Saudi soil.

One locus for tensions between the Saudi state and its Wahhabi popular base to manifest is the powerful Saudi religious police (Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice), a constant reminder of the importance of Wahhabism to the ruling Saudi regime. After a pair of altercations in early September pushed this institution into the spotlight, some Saudi analysts began cautiously voicing fears of an internal power struggle within it. A snippet of the first altercation, in which the religious police attacked a British man and his Saudi wife, was caught on video and quickly went viral. A few days later a Saudi woman made news after insulting religious police by calling them ISIS members. For Fouad Ibrahim, author of the first excerpted article, Saudi Arabia is going through a painful moment as it comes to grips with the fact that “there is an ISIS society dwelling in the midst of the Wahhabi society that it thought it managed and controlled.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



Religious police logo. Source: <http://goo.gl/aLTHXm>

Source:

لماذا هو خطر على السعودية؟ داعش... الوعد الوهابي المؤجل
Fouad Ibrahim. “Why ISIS is a threat to Saudi Arabia: Wahhabism’s deferred promise,” 22 August 2014. Al-Akhbar (Lebanon). English-language version: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/why-isis-threat-saudi-arabia-wahhabism%E2%80%99s-deferred-promise>

Saudi Arabia discovered that there is an ISIS society dwelling in the midst of the Wahhabi society that it thought it managed and controlled. The House of Saud noted that a Wahhabi resurgence was launched from outside the border this time and it represents the biggest and most dangerous threat faced by the Saudi regime since its inception... The House of Saud fought the religious regimes that emerged after the Arab Spring. They allocated a huge budget to overthrow the Muslim Brotherhood rule in Egypt in order to prevent the emergence of a model of Islamic rule that competes with and undermines the legitimacy of the Saudi regime. But there appeared from within the Wahhabi arena people who carry a competing project and who have inflammatory ideas, religious justifications, military and human power that make them a potential alternative in a divided environment. This was revealed by the calls made by young people on social networking sites to the prince of the faithful of the Islamic State to come to the Hijaz and liberate Mecca from the House of Saud.

(continued)

Continued: Wahhabier than Thou



Juhayman al-Otaybi. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juhayman_al-Otaybi#mediaviewer/File:Juhayman_al-Otaibi.jpg

Source:

انتفاضة داعش في مكة والمدينة مع الأضحى...
 “ISIS Intifada in Mecca and Medina during al-Adha,” 26 August 2014. Al-Binaa.
<http://al-binaa.com/albinaa/?article=13015>

Secret reports, some of which were obtained by al-Binaa, make clear that the issue is not only concern about the nature, composition and plans of ISIS, but also information on an ISIS plan to take over Mecca and Medina during Eid al-Adha and which has become a serious concern for the West and its allies... The danger is between the dates of October 5 and 15, during the al-Adha holidays in Saudi Arabia. According to the reports, hundreds of ISIS fighters from various nationalities may prepare to travel there under the pretense of performing the Hajj. There they will be met by Saudi al-Qaeda cells to arm them and provide them with logistical equipment, hence the need to prioritize the fight against ISIS and put their fighters on the defensive in Syria and Iraq...

Source:

السعودية تواجه “خيارات صعبة” ثم “خيارات أصعب”
 Jamal Khashoggi. “Saudi Arabia Faces Difficult Choices Followed by More Difficult Choices,” 6 September 2014. Al-Hayat. <http://goo.gl/f1i3OI>

Saudi Arabia and Iran, despite their long enmity, agree that ISIS represents a threat to their national security. Although Saudi Arabia wishes to eliminate ISIS, it does not want to do so in a way that benefits Iran. ISIS has succeeded in breaking up the “Shia Crescent” extending from Tehran to Beirut via Syria and Iraq. Indeed ever since ISIS peeled off most of central Iraq in order to constitute its “Islamic State,” Iran has been unable to use land routes through Iraq to supply its ally in Damascus with weapons and oil ... [the kingdom] is primarily focused on defending the internal front, which has become threatened ever since al-Qaeda or ISIS (no difference between them) have become active in it as a result of their recent victories in Iraq and Syria.... In summary: The project to destroy ISIS is still in its infancy and the important thing for now is the internal front. We have several years ahead of us in “The Grand War against Terrorism.”

Source:

لا استراتيجية سعودية هجومية لمواجهة “داعش”
 Mohammed Balut. “No Saudi Offensive Strategy to Confront ISIS,” 2 September 2014. Al-Safir. <http://www.assafir.com/Article/1/369689>

A Saudi official who works on the Syria file in Antakya, Turkey, said that no clear Saudi strategy has materialized to confront al-Baghdadi’s expansion from Syria to Iraq and even Jordan and Saudi Arabia itself. The official expressed the ambiguities of the Turkish position toward ISIS, with local Turkish officials even providing the group with facilities to operate in Syria. “We have no strategy to stop ISIS at present,” he says, “and the final battle between us and ISIS will ultimately take place on our land.” Under the scorching Saudi sands, the sleeping knives of ISIS await.

Racial Environment in Zimbabwe Aggravates Economic Conditions, Refugee Situation

OE Watch Commentary: *Once again Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's president since 1987 (though his strong influence on the nation goes back years before then), has spouted anti-white remarks. Reading the accompanying article, one sees these are not nuanced comments subject to misinterpretation, but instead overt racist language aimed squarely at whites living in Zimbabwe. In particular, Mugabe singled out those of British ancestry, stating they should go back to England. A result of his anti-white rants are that they aggravating the nation's black refugee crisis.*

Zimbabwe's policy of taking white-owned farmland and redistributing it to blacks, what some say is an attempt to right a colonial period wrong, when much of the best land went to whites, has been an economic disaster. For various reasons many of these now black-owned farms have failed, resulting in the country once described as the breadbasket of Africa having to import foodstuffs. In conjunction with other ruinous policies, inflation at one point in 2008 topped 75 billion percent per month; now practically all business transactions, including domestic ones, are done with foreign currencies.

The economy started to rebound somewhat from its disastrous lows when the Unity Government between Mugabe and his opposition was founded in 2009. It was a bumpy road, with several foreign companies willing to make investments and others not, as they were too unsure of the risks, including Mugabe, whose anti-white proclamations tend to rattle potential investors. Thus, Zimbabwe remains a nation of great potential wealth with numerous valuable resources, including fertile farmland, large mineral reserves of platinum and diamonds, and gorgeous landscapes that used to attract throngs of tourists. However, it is also a nation that has struggled and continues to struggle politically, greatly hindering development.

Unfortunately, the economy has once again begun to decline. Mugabe's comments telling the whites of his country to go back to England have not helped the situation. His justice minister tried to calm the jittery nerves of investors by saying it was a misunderstanding, but fears of nationalization and similar consequences continue to reverberate.

*It is not possible to fully understand the operational environment of the southern part of Africa without understanding Zimbabwe, because over three million Zimbabweans have fled the economic disaster and repressive political situation of their homeland, with many taking refuge in South Africa and Botswana. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Source: "Zimbabwe: Go Back to England, Mugabe Tells Whites," New Zimbabwe (republished in AllAfrica.com), 5 Sept 2014, http://allafrica.com/stories/201409060059.html?aa_source=acrdn-f0

"The West prefers a weak leader who, they hope, would allow the whites to come back," he [Mugabe] said, speaking in Shona.

"They think if they intimidate us we will be cowed and allow the whites to come back; that will never happen.

"Don't they (whites) know where their ancestors came from? The British who are here should all go back to England.

"What is the problem? We now have aeroplanes which can take them back quicker than the ships used by their ancestors."

Mugabe, commended globally for his reconciliation policy after independence in 1980, now regularly rails against whites and western leaders.

He believes damaging sanctions imposed by the European Union and the United States were aimed at punishing him for daring to right a colonial wrong by giving land to black Zimbabweans.

...Justice Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa later moved to calm investor concerns over the remarks by claiming that Mugabe was misunderstood.



A pregnant Zimbabwean woman crawls under a barbed wire fence to reach South Africa.

Source: <http://www.southafrica.to/provinces/Limpopo/Limpopo.php5>

African Union Recognizes Ebola Outbreak as Both a Medical and Security Concern

1 September 2014

“In an unprecedented step, the first of its kind in the history of the African Union (AU), the Peace and Security Council (PSC) has decided to deploy a humanitarian mission to help end the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus.”

OE Watch Commentary: In response to the Ebola outbreak sweeping across several West African nations, the African Union (AU) is deploying a humanitarian mission to the area. As the accompanying article relates, the AU is concerned about the epidemic not just from a medical standpoint but from a security one, too. Based on the information in this article, as well as others, the security aspect of the mission can essentially be broken down into three components: protecting medical personnel, combating the spread of the disease through means such as enforcing quarantines, and keeping civil society from unraveling, such as preventing looting during panics.

To be sure, it is not just the AU that regards the Ebola outbreak as both a security and a medical concern. Countries and organizations outside of Africa are directing tremendous resources in an effort to turn the tide against the deadly disease. While the response by the AU and others to the crisis is welcome, it is also a sign of the limited public health capabilities in many African nations. In fairness, perhaps even if the region were rich it would still have required outside assistance, but the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone - two countries hit hard by the Ebola epidemic - greatly damaged their economies, resulting in little money left for spending on health care needs. There is also little money for these countries to meet the security needs associated with the outbreak.

The AU, which is stepping in to help fill the void, recognizes the urgent need to stop the spread of the disease and the problems, such as an economic crisis, that come with it. West African nations are seeing a marked drop in tourism, a vital source of foreign exchange necessary to pay for medicines and other needed supplies. Other factors, such as people avoiding marketplaces for fear of catching the disease, are also battering the economy. Instability and insecurity, like the disease, are starting to spread, fueled, in part, by rumors, some of them blaming health care workers for infecting others. In Nzerekore, Guinea's second largest city, riots erupted over such rumors, requiring the military to intervene.

Many epidemiologists are predicting the disease will continue to spread. Military officials are also increasingly worried, such as Liberia's defense minister who said his country is facing a serious threat to its very existence. In other words, the worst is yet to come, both from a medical and a security standpoint. The AU, in deploying a mission to combat the disease, wants to make sure that Liberia, indeed all of Africa, survives this existential threat. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



Caregivers wearing protective gear while tending to a patient with Ebola. Source: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/03/22/355719/ebola-epidemic-raging-across-guinea/>

Source: “Ebola threatening Liberia’s existence, minister warns,” AFP (France), 10 Sep 2014, <http://www.afp.com/en/node/2817586>

...the PSC [Peace and Security Council] authorized the first AU humanitarian intervention by mandating ‘the immediate deployment of an AU-led military and civilian humanitarian mission, comprising medical doctors, nurses and other medical and paramedical personnel, as well as military personnel, as required for the effectiveness and protection of the mission.’

Underscoring the urgency of the matter, the PSC tasked the AU Commission to promptly prepare the necessary concept of operations for the speedy deployment of the mission.

Among these countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone are the worst affected. In these countries and in Guinea, the Ebola outbreak is not just a public health emergency. It also affects economic activities and social stability, and thus poses a serious security threat. There is genuine concern that the outbreak, if unchecked for too long, could have a negative impact on the stability of these countries. This may apply to the DRC as well if the outbreak in that country runs out of control.

The historic decision ... was informed as much by these security concerns as by the medical emergency created by the Ebola outbreak.

OE Watch Commentary: *West Africa is in many ways an anomaly. On the one hand, it is one of the most chronically insecure regions in the world; on the other, its states have historically recognized that their mutual insecurity meant that cooperation among them to combat their collective security threats – nearly all of which are transnational, and therefore not contained within one country – was necessary. Yet even in a region in which countries have shown an inordinate amount of cooperation as compared to other regions within and outside of Africa, cooperation to deal with a number of threats – from insurgencies, to piracy, to Ebola, and others – seems to be evermore present. The three accompanying articles offer examples of the ways that such states are contemporarily coordinating with one another to deal with the numerous security challenges they currently face.*

It should be noted that cooperation in West Africa was not a foregone conclusion when countries gained their independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Early discussions on collective security cooperation in Africa were led in no small part by Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, who urged all newly-independent states – not just those in West Africa – to form a Pan-African army for collective self-defense against external encroachment from former colonial powers. These attempts failed, due to newly-liberated states' desires to retain autonomy in the aftermath of colonialism. In West Africa specifically, the region's giant, Nigeria, quickly took the reins at leading the charge for cooperative efforts, and by 1975 had helped to spearhead the creation of the region's preeminent (current) security cooperation organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Yet, the existence of the organization itself was not sufficient for cooperative efforts to occur. On the one hand, West African states were wary of Nigeria's leadership aims, assuming (correctly) that it was trying to use the organization to bolster its image in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. On the other, the lingering presence of former colonial power France meant that the majority of West African states – which had been under France's rule – continued to look to Paris rather than to other African states when in need.

Yet, West Africa proved itself to be the most forward thinking of African regions when ECOWAS broke the Pan-African norms of non-intervention and intervened, for ostensibly humanitarian purposes, in Liberia in 1990 under the auspices of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). ECOMOG would intervene again in 1997 in Sierra Leone and in 1999 in Guinea Bissau.



<http://businessdayonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Ecowas-map.jpg>

Source: Vanguard (Lagos). 2014. "West Africa: Ecowas Defence Chiefs to Hold Session in Ghana", September 8. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201409090403.html>.

Abuja - The ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff (CCDS) will hold its 34th Ordinary Session from Sept. 9 to 11 in Ghana.

A statement issued by the commission's spokesperson, Mr Sunny Ugoh on Monday in Abuja, said it was to review the general security situation in the region and determine adequate responses.

The regional defence chiefs will among other issues, be briefed on the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa, which is a security threat to the region....CCDS meeting will also receive an update on the security situation in Northern Nigeria, where the Boko Haram sect has been waging relentless deadly terrorist attacks and kidnappings.

The statement stated that the meeting would also consider the Status Report on the ECOWAS Standby Force and receive updates on the new Peace Support Operation Division... Other considerations would be on the operation of the Maritime Model Zone E and the Defence and Security Sector Reform Programme (DSSRP) in Guinea Bissau.

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Continued: West African Cooperation on Collective Security on the Rise

Given this robust history, West Africa is looked to by continental observers as a leading, if not unlikely source for cooperation. As the first article highlights, an upcoming meeting of regional defense chiefs in the region will focus on cooperation on a number of traditional and nontraditional issues. The group will assuredly discuss the Boko Haram insurgency, which, though primarily based in Nigeria, is now deeply embedded in Cameroon, and whose members are also found in Chad and Niger. Yet more importantly, and emphasizing the new dimensions of the meaning of “security” in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa, West African states are now cooperating in relation to diseases as well. Given the Ebola virus’ presence in five of West Africa’s fourteen countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Nigeria, and Senegal), both health ministries and armed forces are coordinating their efforts. (For more on African cooperation in relation to Ebola, see Robert Feldman’s article in this issue.) Finally, defense chiefs will also discuss other areas of West African cooperation, including the situation in Mali, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and the readiness of the West African regional standby force.

*In addition to these current pressing threats, West African states are also working to create mechanisms to deal with threats that might collectively threaten them in the future. As per the second article, West African states have recently created an emergency preparedness fund, which requests a perhaps overly-ambitious 1% of each state’s national budget, to deal with unforeseen disasters. As the third article relays, the European Union is helping to underwrite some cooperation efforts that will allow the region to shift from a reactive approach to security to a more preventive mode. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

Source: Subair, Gboal. 2014. “ECOWAS Countries to Set aside 1% National Budget for Disaster Management”, May 15, Nigerian Tribune (Lagos) . <http://tribune.com.ng/news/news-headlines/item/5241-ecowas-countries-to-set-aside-1-national-budget-for-disaster-management/5241-ecowas-countries-to-set-aside-1-national-budget-for-disaster-management>

Member countries in the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) will soon be made to set aside one per cent of their national budget for disaster management in their respective countries.

...In the opening remark, the Director-General of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Alhaji Mohammed Sani Sidi, disclosed that Nigeria was already devoting one per cent of its budget to disaster management, adding, however, that the challenge in Nigeria was that early warning mechanism was not matched by early action.

...Alhaji Sidi, stressing that the issue of data collection was a challenge to Nigeria and Africa generally, said that NEMA was collaborating with the United Nations on the issue of data collection, data management and data interpretation. “In Nigeria, there is a political will for disaster risk management. The commitment of the Federal Government of Nigeria to risk reduction, the support of the United Nations Agencies, multilateral organisations and development partners and the private sector have sustained our risk reduction initiatives” he said.

Source: Ahmad, Romoke W. 2014. “West Africa: EU-Ecowas Security Project for Implementation 2015.” Daily Trust (Abuja), September 9. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201409091075.html>.

A 29.3 million euro project supported by the European Union for the strengthening of peace, security and stability in the ECOWAS region will enter its implementation phase in 2015.

.....She said the EU-ECOWAS Peace, Security and Stability Mandate (PSS) initiative would enable the commission to shift from reactive to a preventive mode of peacekeeping through the acquisition of enabling strategic, operational and management capacities.

She said the project would benefit the entire region by the strengthening the commission’s directorates, especially the Department of Political Affairs, Peace keeping and Security, and the ECOWAS Peace Fund Unit.



Adeyinfo, Tunji. 2014. "Jonathan Support Group Mocks Chibok Girls with #BringBackGoodluck2015." Source: <http://thecalling.com/>

“Even for an administration that has always been insensitive, using #BringBackGoodluck2015 is a mockery of not just ChibokGirls but 2 Nigeria.”

OE Watch Commentary: Critics of President Goodluck Jonathan’s government have long decried the tendency for the Nigerian federal government to politicize the Boko Haram security situation. Those in Boko-Haram-affected areas in the north claim that Jonathan, a southerner, is half-heartedly dealing with the insurgency to destabilize the region in advance of presidential elections in 2015. For his part, Jonathan has claimed that northern politicians’ claims of danger are overblown and a political ploy to force his election loss. Accusations are also frequent that northern legislators are even secretly funding Boko Haram for these purposes. Yet while the security situation in the country has been politicized in past years and months, especially in relation to the Chibok kidnappings, things may have reached a tipping point with the unveiling of a controversial new re-election campaign slogan by some of Jonathan’s supporters.

As the first article details, supporters of the #bringbackourgirls campaign and the search to find the girls more generally are feeling overshadowed by the recent Ebola outbreaks in Nigeria and West Africa. In response, they are working to ensure the issue gets attention, even in the face of a lack of government action.

Yet for all of their seriousness of purpose,

President Goodluck Jonathan’s supporters have succeeded in creating what might be his administration’s largest faux-pas to date: the unveiling of a new re-election campaign, which caused waves when the billboard (pictured above) was released. The name of the campaign #bringbackjonathanin2015 seeks to play on the globally recognized #bringbackourgirls campaign in the aftermath of the April 2014 kidnappings.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the backlash has been considerable. Around the world, Nigerians and non-Nigerians have expressed disgust about the blatant attempts at politicizing the human-rights-based hashtag for political purposes. Beyond the simple appropriation of the hashtag in and of itself, there is also the intense irony that the group supporting Jonathan’s administration’s efforts

Source: Hosea-Abana, Tsambido. 2014. “Nigeria: Hosea: ‘Some Parents Are No Longer in Chibok.’” Deutsche Welle (Bonn), August 14, AllAfrica.com edition. http://allafrica.com/stories/201408150481.html?aa_source=mf-hdlns.

It has been four months now and there’s still been no word of the Chibok girls. Are people still motivated?

No one expected it would take so long. We have to remind people that these girls are still there and nobody is talking about them. We have to go and talk about them! Also, some of the media have packed their things. Many media, both national and international, they are no longer coming, but we are going to visit them and invite them so that we keep on talking about these girls, so that the Ebola issue does not overpower their interests.

.....

After meeting parents of the girls last month, President Goodluck Jonathan promised he would do everything in his power to free the girls. How are those parents coping now?

Some are no longer in Chibok. Some have left to go somewhere else as a refuge because Chibok has been attacked and there is a rumour of more attacks on surrounding villages. People are fearing that the next community they will attack will again be Chibok. So many people have run away from Chibok now. And even some of the parents of the girls in the bush have died. Just three days ago, one father died because his house was burnt and he ran away to Maiduguri to find refuge but there he couldn’t cope and he died. There are many victims; things are very bad in Chibok.

(continued)

Continued: Nigeria and the Politicization of the Chibok Kidnappings

has unequivocally failed to recapture the girls. Though anecdotal, Nigerians on Twitter were quick to react in shock. A sampling of reactions from 9 September follow in the form of the second “article” herein.

Yet, while Western media and the Nigerian Twiteratti were quick to respond, the Nigerian media as a whole, have been, as of this writing, curiously silent. In response to a question that this author posted on social media inquiring about the lack of coverage in the Nigerian media expressing outrage about the sign, I received the following from a Nigerian: “Mr. Warner you are jumping the gun. Our media will not express outrage until Western media tells us we should. Recall that our President only started caring about the Chibok girls when CNN and BBC gave him the go-ahead. I hope I’ve helped.” To that end, one of the few articles that has surfaced from the Nigerian media (as of this writing on September 9) has simply been reprints of a Washington Post story that labeled #bringbackjonathanin2015 “the most inappropriate hash-tag of the year.” As the 2015 elections near, the politicization of the Nigerian landscape will likely continue to be an enduring trend. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**

Examples of Nigerian Twitter Reactions to the New Campaign Slogan

Bukola Saraki (APC) @bukolasaraki 5h

Even for an administration that has always been insensitive, using #BringBackGoodluck2015 is a mockery of not just ChibokGirls but 2 Nigeria

ÀlàbíAdé @Daeyusbobo 2h

It seems some Nigerians love hardship. How can people b so insensitive? Whoever is behind #BringBackGoodluck2015 shld b thrown in2 a dungeon

Tunji @heymode 24m

Using this mocking hashtag #BringBackGoodluck2015 is the reason why NO ONE SHOULD VOTE FOR JONATHAN

EagleEye @bashiryusuf 5h

The day I saw #BringBackGoodluck2015 on the streets, that day I know the fate of the abducted Chibok girls and #BringBackOurGirls is sealed.

Karen Attiah @KarenAttiah 17h

Filed under “Making-A-Mockery-Of-Violence-Against-Girls” is this shambolic #BringBackJonathan / #BringBackGoodluck2015 campaign.

Eritrea’s Military Unprofessionalism and US Security Assistance in the Horn of Africa

By Jason Warner, FMSO

The United States military’s Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) is in need of capable and dependable regional military allies as it seeks to bring stability to the Horn of Africa. Eritrea – once a proclaimed US friend and home to one of Africa’s largest military establishments – superficially seems to fit the bill. Drawing from literature on the ‘unprofessional nature’ of African militaries as well as the scant amount of open source material available on the notoriously secretive nation, this article argues that despite its experienced and well-funded military, President Isaias Afewerki’s overbearing control of it has made Eritrea’s military highly ‘unprofessional’ in various ways. As a result, a military that could be a useful US ally in a historically tenuous region will likely remain more of a problem than a boon for the United States into the foreseeable future.

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09592318.2013.857940#.U_NHDeNdX-5

Small Wars & Insurgencies

“Boko Haram are inside the bush, everywhere. The senior commanders are sacrificing soldiers.”

OE Watch Commentary: In Nigeria there are several factors making it difficult for the military to combat Boko Haram. One of the most important is that Nigerian troops are defecting and refusing to fight Boko Haram. They claim that the military is not providing them with adequate equipment. As a result, better armed Boko Haram militants are defeating them in battle. An article in This Day on 20 August offered a soldier's perspective on this situation. The soldier was one of 40 mutineers who refused to deploy to fight Boko Haram in Borno State, Nigeria. He blamed the army leadership and senior commanders for indifference to soldiers' deaths and said that Boko Haram was everywhere throughout Borno. A deployment, according to this soldier's perspective, was essentially a death sentence.

The article also offered the perspective of the Nigerian Directorate of Defence Information, which praised the courage of Nigerian soldiers and denied reports of mutinies. Only days after this praise, however, 500 Nigerian soldiers fled a battle with Boko Haram in Borno and found refuge in Cameroon. The Directorate, nonetheless, claims that all soldiers sent into battle are fully armed and that criticisms from the mutineers are lies.

Veterans of previous Nigerian wars, such as the civil war against the breakaway Republic of Biafra in the 1960s, blame the lack of national vision for the failure to suppress the Boko Haram insurgency. These veterans suggest that if Nigeria went to war against Cameroon over disputed territories – as occurred in the past – Nigerians would come together and win. However, they believe that the country in general is indifferent towards its remote northeast, which is why there is a motivation problem in combating Boko Haram.

While soldiers, commanders and veterans continue to find blame, Boko Haram continues to take territory. The militants now control cities and towns in three different states in northeastern Nigeria, and Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau has declared one town, Gwoza, as “part of a Caliphate... that has nothing to do with Nigeria anymore.” The urgency of ending the blame game and finding solutions to Boko Haram is increasing with Boko Haram's successes on the battlefield and in the battle for controlling the narrative about the insurgency. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Source: “Soldiers Rebel over Lack of Weapons to Fight Boko Haram,” ThisDay, 20 August 2014.

Soldiers Rebel over Lack of Weapons to Fight Boko Haram

A group of soldiers in the northeastern part of the country is refusing to fight Islamist sect, Boko Haram, until they receive better equipment. The soldier, who requested anonymity, said at least 40 of his colleagues would refuse orders to be deployed to battle the insurgents.

But in a swift reaction, the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) has denied the report, saying there was no mutiny in the army. The denial by the DHQ came as indications emerged yesterday that the Chief of Army Staff, Lt-Gen. Kenneth Minimah, has ordered the arrest of soldiers and officers of Battalion 195 who are alleged to have deserted their operational duties in Biu near Damboa in Borno State.

The soldier was quoted as saying: “Soldiers are dying like fowl.

“The Nigerian Army is not ready to fight Boko Haram,” he said, explaining that soldiers were not being given enough weapons and ammunition to take them on. “Boko Haram are inside the bush, everywhere. The senior commanders are sacrificing soldiers.”

The Directorate of Defence Information insisted, “... Anyone who knows the military reward for mutiny will not join anyone to try it. The overwhelming majority of the Nigerian soldiers remain as brave and disciplined as ever.”

Increasingly frustrated about the inferiority of their weapons compared to Boko Haram, some Nigerian troops are refusing to carry out counter-insurgency operations against Boko Haram. Nigeria.

Source: <http://www.view.com.ng/confusion-among-boko-haram-terrorists-fear-their-commanders-flee-sambisa-forest/>



“It matters little to the government of Colombia what risks those young men run.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Colombian government recently and quickly extradited, or at least handed over, two prominent Venezuelan student protesters who were self-exiled in Bogotá. The move was met with extremely harsh reactions from many Colombian commentators, who apparently saw the move as a saddening and shameful act. It was expected that a victory by President Santos in the recent Colombian presidential election would favor the survival of the Maduro regime in Venezuela. Most Colombians, even among Santos’ critics, apparently did not anticipate such a direct form of assistance from the Colombian government to the Venezuelan government. The Colombian military was apparently involved in the operation. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)***



Colombia - Venezuela flag pins.

Source: Editors, “La vileza de Santos” (Santos’ vile act), El Nacional Caracas , 9 September 2014, <http://www.denunciando.com/politica-y-sociedad-85/927163-editorial-de-el-nacional-de-caracas-la-vileza-de-santos.html>.

“It matters little to the government of Colombia what risks those young men run in being turned over to the Venezuelan authorities that have been pursuing them for some time. It is inexplicable how such a comando operation could be executed and two students turned over to the ghoulish Bolivarian Intelligence Service barely 24 hours after being detained. We remember that to turn over Walid Makled [Venezuelan industrialist and drug trafficker] it took nine months.”

Source: Fernando Londoño, “La Hora de La Verdad” (The Hour of Truth) Radio Red Rcn, Bogotá, 8 September 2013, <http://www.lahoradelaverdad.com.co/editorial/lo-que-hicieron-con-los-jovenes-venezolanos-no-tiene-perdon.html>.

“...we return to the air to suggest to you an extremely hard truth and to share with you an immense national sorrow. What has been done by way of the Colombian exterior ministry, by the government of doctor Juan Manuel Santos to Venezuelan students Lorent Enrique Gómez Saleh and Gabriel Valles cannot be forgiven on an international level...”

Source: Justicia, “Habla por primera vez general de Escuela sobre venezolanos expulsados” (A general [of the war college] speaks for the first time about the expelled Venezuelan students), El Tiempo.com, Bogotá, 10 September 2014, <http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/asi-se-colaron-los-jovenes-expulsados-en-la-escuela-superior-de-guerra/14514455>

“General Javier Fernández, director of the Superior War College of the Armed Forces, speaks for the first time about the case of the two Venezuelan students expelled [from the country] for proselytizing and because they attempted to register in that center of studies [Sergio Arboleda University] irregularly.”

Source: Andres Salazar and Pedro Garcia, “la verdadera razon del presidente de colombia juan manuel santos de expulsar a estudiantes venezol (the real reason the President of Colombia Juan Manuel Santos expelled the Venezuelan students), YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3L0gx_HyMBs&feature=youtu.be.

“It is sad to see that a country with the sovereignty to expel whomever it wishes, because it can indeed do that, has taken these young men and has turned them over at a bridge as though they were a pair of dogs...”

Mexican Drug Traffickers Using Drones to Bring Drugs into the United States

17 August 2014

OE Watch Commentary: According to this source article, Mexican cartels have been using drones to transport drugs across the US-Mexican border since around 2011. This same source further indicated that some of the first drones detected by radar systems were shot down in central Arizona. By 2012 drone use along the border had rapidly increased, as evidenced by the US interception of 150 drones carrying an estimated two metric tons of drugs, primarily marijuana. Today, Mexican sources describe drones as being the “perfect drug mule,” given that they involve less risk to drug-trafficking organizations and their personnel. Additionally, they cost significantly less than drug tunnels and semi-submersibles, and are even able to transport cash shipments from the US into Mexico without being detected. As the article points out, with the help of Mexican-based drone producers, original models have been modified and are now able to transport anywhere from 60 to 100 kg of drugs. This home-based manufacturing system also benefits Mexican drone producers, as they are paid 2-3 times the asking price for the final product. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

Source: “Narco envía droga a EU... en drones.” Ejeccentral. Accessed on August 17, 2014 from <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion-mexico/2014/carteles-fabrican-narcodrones-trasiego-eu-1022274.html>

Drones Used as Drug Mules to Smuggle Drugs into the United States

Mexican drug cartels are using drones to transport drugs across the US/Mexico border. Authorities first became aware of this phenomenon in 2011 after multiple drones detected by radar systems were shot down upon their entrance into the United States. Since their first detection, two significant changes associated with drone use by cartels have been reported. First, Mexican drug cartels are now placing orders to drone producers in Mexican-based cities including the Federal District, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Querétaro and Tijuana. This is a change because at the start of 2011, virtually all drones owned and operated by cartels were produced abroad; primarily in Israel. Because of the change, Mexican based drone producers are also benefiting as they are paid 2-3 times the asking price for the final product. Second, drug cartels have realized that using drones to transport drugs does not carry as much risk or cost as much as traditional means of transport (human traffickers, narco tunnels, semi-submersibles). Regarding risk, it is difficult to track a drone back to a particular group.



Drone used to carry a package. Source: <http://www.sanvictor54.com>



A hexacopter drone and contraband were found in a car near the prison in 2013. Source: BBC

Source: “Hackers peruanos vulneran seguridad de la FACH y filtran cientos de correos electrónicos de la institución.” El monstrador. Accessed on August 23, 2014 from <http://www.elmonstrador.cl/pais/2014/08/14/hackers-peruanos-vulneran-seguridad-de-la-fach-y-filtran-cientos-de-correos-electronicos-de-la-institucion/>

OE Watch Commentary: *Cybercrime in Latin America is becoming a shared concern, as in recent months and years countries including Chile, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, and Argentina have been affected. One of the most recent cybercrimes reported in Latin America occurred in Chile between May and June 2013. In this particular instance a hacker group known as Lulz Security Peru announced via its Twitter and Facebook pages that it had successfully hacked into two Chilean Air Force (FACH) email accounts/databases: the Passport and Visas Department and the Contracts and Logistics Administration Department. In response to these attacks, the FACH indicated that they did not impose a threat to national security. However, many argued that this exposed cyber-security vulnerabilities not only in Chile, but in all of Latin America as well.*
End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)

Cybercrime, the Chilean Air Force, and Peruvian Hackers

In August 2014, a hacker group known as Lulz Security Peru announced via their Twitter and Facebook pages (@LulzSecPeru) that they had successfully hacked into two Chilean Air Force (FACH) email accounts/databases. These accounts were identified as the Passport and Visas Department and the Contracts and Logistics Administration Department. The first account contained hundreds of emails with personal identifiable information and civil status. The second account contained Chilean defense contracts which outlined past and ongoing purchase agreements of missiles, satellites, radars, and aircraft.

Missiles, Satellites, and Radars

Information extracted by Lulz Security Peru from the second account captured the attention of Chilean Air Force Intelligence Service (SIFA) because they contained sensitive information including:

- Mechanisms utilized by the FACH to evade radar detection
- Past or ongoing FACH negotiations with various companies for the purchase of weapons, hardware, and weapon adapters
- Equipment manuals
- Arrangements made with the help of Israel for an F-16 aircraft squadron
- Information regarding negotiations for satellite access needed for a project called SSOT

National Security

The FACH claimed that the information contained in the emails that were subsequently released by the Lulz hacker group did not pose a threat to national security because they did not contain detailed weapon information. Mladen Yopo, a Political Scientist, agreed with the FACH in saying that the released information did not affect national security as the actual value of weapons systems resides in the tactical and strategic use of them and/or how well personnel using these systems have been trained. Yopo further added that the most significant risk associated with the hacking of government websites/accounts is the effect it could pose on the everyday lives of citizens.

On the opposite spectrum, Francisco Vera, a lawyer working at the service of Derechos Digitales (Digital Rights) indicated that the most recent hacking incident raises concerns about the cyber security strategy being utilized by the Chilean government. He added that the Chilean Minister of the Interior is in charge of information security, but that it is not clear how much of the current budget is allocated to cyber security. Vera also indicated that there is a lack of concern regarding the implementation of an efficient mechanism to protect information.

MERCOSUR Members Concerned About Implications of a Silva Presidency

12 August 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *As the prospects of a Dilma Rousseff second term continue to dim and the Brazilian Socialist Party's Marina Silva continues to climb the polls, fellow MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) members Venezuela, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina have reason to be concerned. First, as the following excerpts from Silva's official platform document, the Programa do Governo, would suggest, Silva disapproves of the protectionist and economic isolationism that MERCOSUR has engendered in its member states since Bolivarians began coming to power. Instead, her platform indicates her intention to pursue robust free trade agreements with extra-regional blocks.*

*Secondly, as the Folha de S. Paulo excerpts below indicate, Venezuela, in particular, may have its own reason to be concerned. Twice in the last 12 years elements of the Brazilian government have intervened in Venezuelan internal affairs as mediators in order to defuse institutional crises. The third excerpt intimates that a Silva win would signal at a minimum a turn by Brazil's political ruling classes away from populist politicians ideologically allied with Bolivarianism, and at worst a coming seismic shift in Latin America to more conservative regimes, much as Chavez's 1998 election in Venezuela signaled a shift to the left. Either way, with Brazil being the largest economy by far in MERCOSUR, the coming election will have repercussions that will reverberate throughout the block. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grilo)***

Source: pg. 30, Marina Silva's trade policy platform available for download at: <http://marinasilva.org.br/programa/>

MERCOSUR has not met its original design of constructing an "open regionalism" model. Significant expansion of intra-regional trade was not accompanied by increased engagement and negotiation by the block to increase their transactions with other regions.

...

With the exception of a couple of free trade agreements with economically insignificant markets, the keynote of MERCOSUR is immobility.

Source: Augustin Lewitt, TELELSUR, Folha de S. Paulo: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/mundo/184801-marina-assusta-os-vizinhos.shtml>

In addition to the quality of life of almost 200 million Brazilians, the issue of the region's continued integration also plays an important role in these elections. The re-election of Dilma will undoubtedly signal endorsement of a new cycle (of Bolivarian Political leaders) first inaugurated with the victory of Chavez in 1998. A possible triumph of Marina Silva, contrarily, arouses fears of a return to a past (in terms of economic policy) that was particularly expensive for the majority of people.

Source: Excerpt originally published by a Folha de S. Paulo article available here: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/mundo/184801-marina-assusta-os-vizinhos.shtml>

... And there is the second and perhaps more important inconvenient factor to Venezuela. On two occasions, the diplomatic adviser to Lula (former President of Brazil from 2002-2010), Marco Aurelio Garcia, interfered ... to get Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro of trouble. First in 2002, before Lula took office, (Garcia) traveled to Caracas, amid a more delicate institutional crisis than even this year's, and was able to create a group of friends from Venezuela, which stabilized the situation. The 2002 détente ended up being instrumental to the consolidation of chavismo. This time, it was (Nicolas) Maduro who benefited from the mediation of the UNASUR, also orchestrated by Brazilian diplomacy to overcome street demonstrations that he already could not control, to without resorting to violence. With Marina, it seems that Bolivarianism will no longer be able to rely on this powerful crutch...-

The ISIS Cancer: How It Could be Spreading to Southeast Asia and China

“According to a report from Singapore’s *New Straits Times*, Malaysian security authorities have identified four new terror groups that have the same broad goals as Islamic State and may eventually join forces to carve out territory in countries like Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia to form an independent, unified “super” Islamic caliphate to rule parts of Southeast Asia.”

OE Watch Commentary: Concern about the spread of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) forces has been mounting in Southeast Asia and China. Malaysia, for example, believes about 30 of its countrymen are fighting alongside ISIS. The first article talks about four Malaysian family members who have joined the terrorist group. According to the journal, *Malaysian Insider*, the family consists of the parents, their 18-year-old daughter and 14-year-old son. While the father and son are reportedly fighting alongside extremists, the wife is working as a cook for the fighters. It is currently unknown what role the daughter is playing.

According to the second article, news of the family joining the terrorist group has sparked further concern that ISIS could be spreading in Southeast Asia and China despite strong opposition from governments in the region. The article lists four new terrorist groups that have “the same broad goals as Islamic State and may eventually join forces to carve out territory in countries like Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia to form an independent, unified ‘super’ Islamic caliphate to rule parts of Southeast Asia.”

Recruits are also believed to be originating from the Muslim Uyghur minority group in China’s Xinjiang autonomous region. While these and other stories have not yet been confirmed, they demonstrate the potential dangers and the growing global concern regarding the spread of ISIS. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

Source: Muzliza Mustafa, “Malaysian Family of Four, Including Teenagers, Fighting for ISIS in Middle East, Say Sources, *The Malaysian Insider*, September 8, 2014, <<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/malaysian-family-of-four-including-teenagers-fighting-for-isis-in-middle-ea>>.

Malaysian Family of Four, Including Teenagers, Fighting for ISIS in Middle East, Say Sources

A family of four is believed to be among 30 Malaysians fighting in the Middle East alongside the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Isis) forces, ...

Sources said the four were believed to be the first Malaysian family fighting in the ongoing civil war in Syria, and were among the hundreds of foreigners who signed up with Isis which had been condemned by most Muslim countries including Malaysia.

...

“All four family members have been assisting Isis in their battle against Syrian forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad,” the source disclosed.

...

The *Malaysian Insider* had earlier reported that Malaysian women were believed to have travelled to the Middle East to offer Jihad al-Nikah or sexual jihad.

Jihad al-Nikah refers to a controversial concept where Sunni women allegedly offer themselves in sexual comfort roles to fighters for the establishment of Islamic rule.

Source: “Influence of ISIS Felt in China, Southeast Asia,” *Want China Times*, September 9, 2014, <<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20140909000105&cid=1101>>.

Influence of ISIS Felt in China, Southeast Asia

... (ISIS), may be spreading in Southeast Asia and China despite strong opposition from governments in the region.

According to a report from Singapore’s *New Straits Times*, Malaysian security authorities have identified four new terror groups that have the same broad goals as Islamic State and may eventually join forces to carve out territory in countries like Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia to form an independent, unified “super” Islamic caliphate to rule parts of Southeast Asia.

The four organizations, identified by the acronyms BKAW, BAJ, Dimzia and ADI, are said to have strong links with similar groups active in the Southeast Asia region as well as Islamic State and the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf.

The claim comes amid reports that Malaysian authorities have identified a local family of four as having joined Islamic State in its “holy crusade” currently being waged in Iraq and Syria.

Ongoing Conflicts from India to Burma (Myanmar)

17 September 2014

“The KNU/KNLA Peace Council (KPC)... issued a letter to the commander stating that Burmese troops are... forbidden to enter KPC territories with uniforms or firearms.”

OE Watch Commentary: Chronic conflicts across this wide region have become “white” noise or ignored background murmurs in much Western reporting. In regional news media, national political pronouncements, and cross-regional organizational reports these conflicts are treated as current concerns with significant future impacts.

Armed conflict between the Government of Burma (Myanmar) and numerous ethnic armies has been at a steady simmer since the end of WWII. An article from Democratic Voice of Burma, an independent Burmese news organization based in Chiang Mai, Thailand, provides the latest regarding the ongoing struggle between the central government and the Karen people, who maintain their own army. With some three ethnic armies extant within the borders of Burma (Myanmar), at any given moment this simmer can turn to a rolling boil affecting not only the people of Burma (Myanmar), but also adjacent nations such as India, Bangladesh, China, and Thailand.

The news media of India have faithfully reported cross-border terrorist camps in Bangladesh for years. One such report from IBN-Live (an India affiliate of CNN) from September 2013 is included here, along with a more recent report from Zee News of India. They chronicle the continuing coordination between India’s Border Security Force and the Border Guards Bangladesh, even after years of violence along the border.

As early as 1992 the Bangladesh government reported the Government of Burma (Myanmar) reinforcing its border to prevent the 170,000 thousand Muslim refugees (Rohingya) from returning to their homes in Burma (Myanmar). The conflict between the Rohingya and the Government of Burma (Myanmar) has continued unabated. A report from The Times of India tells of the Government of India warning Bangladesh about



Karen National Liberation Army responds to attack from Burma (Myanmar) Army in June 2014
Source: <http://knla.wordpress.com/>

Source: DVB, “Karen rebels respond to orders to disarm,” September 18, 2014 <http://www.dvb.no/news/karen-rebels-respond-to-orders-to-disarm/44245>

An ethnic Karen rebel group has responded in kind to an order by the Burmese Army not to wear uniforms or carry firearms in certain government-controlled territory.

A Burmese Army commander allegedly issued an order on 14 September to several ethnic armed groups in the area, prohibiting rebel uniforms and weapons in the Thai-Burmese border town of Myawaddy, Karen State...

...the issue will be on the agenda during upcoming talks between ethnic and government peace negotiators, scheduled to take place on 22 September in Rangoon.

The KPC, a small ethnic armed group established in 2007 by former members of the KNU, signed a fresh peace pact with the government in February 2012. The group is a member of the ethnic peace negotiation bloc, Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team, but is not represented on the ethnic political alliance United Nationalities Federation Council.

Source: IBN-Live, “Terrorists of Indian insurgent outfits operating from 22 ‘hideouts’ in Bangladesh: BSF IG,” September 29, 2014, <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/terrorists-of-indian-insurgent-outfits-operating-from-22-hideouts-in-bangladesh-bsf-ig/425290-3-224.html>

Terrorists...are carrying out anti-India activities from 22 ‘hideouts’ in Bangladesh, mostly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Inspector General (IG) of BSF, Tripura Frontier, RK Mishra said...

The Bangladesh Border Guards are very cooperative with the BSF, Mishra said, adding that they reacted positively when messages were sent to them regarding specific information of terrorist’s presence in the country....

(continued)

Continued: Ongoing Conflicts from India to Burma (Myanmar)

“85 per cent of the 856-km border between the two countries had been fenced.”

terrorist camps for Rohingya Muslims in its Chittagong Hill Tracts bordering Burma (Myanmar). This conflict involves all three nations and bears watching.

*Mention has begun among Western sources concerning connections among the various conflicts across the vast Indo-Pacific Asia realm. There is continued interest in finding a radical Islamic thread connecting these disparate insurgent, criminal, and terrorist groups. The regional press and governmental rhetoric have yet to adopt this sinister global view. However, each nation is quick to connect much of its own challenges to the tacit support of others who fund, encourage, or protect the enemies of their state. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)***

An IG-level meeting of the BSF and BGB is scheduled to be held after the Durga Puja festival, in which issues like cross-border movement of criminals and smuggling would be discussed, he said.

Source: Zee News, “India-Bangladesh to discuss insurgents issue, BGB team coming,” September 18, 2014 http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/india-bangladesh-to-discuss-insurgents-issue-bgb-team-coming_1472084.html

India is likely to ask Bangladesh to flush out North East insurgents hiding in its territory and check cross-border movement of smugglers and illegal migrants during the forthcoming parleys between the two border guarding forces here.

A delegation of the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) is set to arrive in India for the bi-annual talks with their counterparts in the Border Security Force (BSF)...

The BSF is also expected to brief the BGB about measures it has taken to secure the border including deployment of more non-lethal weapons to bring down casualty figures along this open frontier...

“Rohingya Muslims, according to Indian intelligence reports, are being trained in use of firearms and bomb-making at these camps.”

Source: The Times of India, “India alerts Bangladesh about Rohingya terror training camps in Chittagong Hill Tracts,” July 25, 2013, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-alerts-Bangladesh-about-Rohingya-terror-training-camps-in-Chittagong-Hill-Tracts/articleshow/21320102.cms>

India has alerted Bangladesh to the recent emergence of terror training camps for Rohingya Muslims in its Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) bordering Myanmar. Sharing intelligence inputs “from the ground”, the Union home ministry recently told Dhaka how Pakistani terror outfits like Lashker-e-Taiba (LeT) were allegedly training Rohingya rebels in camps spread across the CHT for “launching revenge attacks” in Myanmar...

Home secretary Anil Goswami is said to have drawn his Bangladeshi counterpart’s attention to terror camps that have sprung in CHT region over the past six to seven months. These camps were witnessing terror training sessions by LeT and Jaish commanders, with help from local outfits like Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) that are linked to NGOs like Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO).

Bangladesh has assured India it will verify these camps on the ground.

Let/Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) had in mid-2012 created a new forum, Difa-e-Musalman Arakan (Burma) Conference (Defence of Muslims in Myanmar), to mobilize support for an anti-Myanmar government campaign. A two-member team — comprising JuD spokesperson Nadeem Awan and JuD Publications Wing member Shahid Mahmood Rehmatullah — was deputed last August to forge covert links with like-minded Islamic organizations in Bangladesh and Myanmar...

North Korean Cyber Warriors

11 September 2014

“The information authorities assume that a considerable number of operators of these sites and social network services are top North Korean cyber agents....”

OE Watch Commentary: While it has a reputation of being technologically backwards, in reality North Korea has developed a sophisticated and robust cyber capability. Since the mid-1980s the leadership in Pyongyang has been educating and training cyber warriors in both domestic and foreign universities. Similar to its WMD program, the North Korean leadership understands the asymmetrical qualities of cyber warfare. Given the correlation of forces, it recognizes that North Korea cannot win a conventional war against ROK and US coalition forces. Therefore, Pyongyang has focused on developing an asymmetric warfare strategy, employing WMD, special guerilla forces, information, and psychological and cyber weapons to level the playing field.

A mere sampling of North Korea's cyber-order of battle is revealing. Under the General Reconnaissance Bureau, North Korea's cyber warfare division's headquarters (Office No. 91) is located in Pyongyang. Unit 121 aims at disabling command, control and communication systems of ROK forces in case of conflict. Lab 110 aims at destroying ROK's telecommunication systems and was responsible for conducting distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks against the ROK and the US in June 2009. Unit 35's main mission is internal investigation and security functions, and Unit 204 conducts psychological and information operations. Offices 31,32 and 56, under the General Military Staff, develop penetration programs. Because some of these units or their servers are located in Chinese or foreign territories, it is difficult to find specific evidence on which exact unit has conducted cyber-attacks against the ROK and the US.

The brief excerpt from a South Korean source touches upon yet another aspect of Pyongyang's cyber strategy. In an attempt to win more hearts and minds on the Internet, North Korea has developed a battalion of cyber agents whose mission is “to post messages praising North Korea's Kim Jong Un regime and slandering the South Korean regime.” Because the average North Korean is restricted from the Internet, the leaders in Pyongyang have little fear of an information counterattack and do not have to bother with defensive measures against cyber-attacks. Cyber capability remains one of the most important asymmetric weapons of North Korea. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kim)**



North Korea has purportedly doubled the number of its elite cyber warriors over the past two years from 3,000 to 5,900 personnel. Source: <http://lockerdome.com/6377112579874625/6770012732137492>

Source: “Around 2,000 Pro North Sites Based Overseas Found,” Dong-A Ilbo Online, 11 September 2014 <http://english.donga.com>

It was known Wednesday that military and investigation authorities uncovered 1,784 pro-North Korea Internet sites and social network service accounts operating in overseas servers. These sites and social network services attempted continuously to access South Korean Internet networks to post messages praising North Korea's Kim Jong Un regime and slandering the South Korean regime....

...Han said, “When blocked, pro-North sites and social network service accounts change IPs and repeatedly try to access domestic servers.” The information authorities believe more than 90 percent pro-North sites and social network service accounts servers are operating in China. Server IPs were also found in the U.S., Japan and Europe. The information authorities assume that a considerable number of operators of these sites and social network services are top North Korean cyber agents....

OE Watch Commentary: *The Chinese media have focused attention for months on the country's economy, trying to come up with ways to revitalize it. In the first article Cao Yuanzheng, Chief Economist of the Bank of China, offers an analysis of the economic downturn in China, calling it "the new normal." He explains the decrease as a result of four factors. First, the country's economy has long been based on industry, guided by exports. As the global economy has sunk, exports have decreased. Second, urbanization is driving up the cost of wages for its labor force and challenging cheap labor. Third the country's population is aging, which means a decline in the savings rate. Fourth, energy and other natural resources are becoming scarcer and concern is growing over the environmental damage caused by resource extraction and industrial pollution. This is causing increased conservation and tighter controls over environmental protection, all of which drive up prices.*

Despite this economic downturn, there is still plenty of optimism in China. Cao points to four indicators that show hope, one of which is that technological progress is "markedly speeding up." Investment in research and development has grown rapidly, while the rate of patent developments has expanded. He describes the "sectors spurring the conversion of technology into productive forces" as having become "soft shoot" sectors in "the new normal." These "soft shoots" are aptly named, since it takes time for them "to grow into big trees." He then argues that innovation needs to spread beyond government control.

The second article, written by Ding Yifan, Deputy Director of the State Council Development Research Center's Institute of World Development, takes the argument further by discussing the country's plan to reform state-owned enterprises (SOE). According to Ding, during the 2014 sessions of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative

Source: Cao Yuanzheng, "新常态下中国经济的新变化 (New Changes in China's Economy Under the New Normal)," People's Daily Online, September 8, 2014, <http://www.ce.cn/xwzx/gnsz/gdxw/201409/08/t20140908_3496979.shtml>.

New Changes in China's Economy Under the New Normal

...the new normal is GDP saying farewell to double-digit growth...

...

Although the economic downturn pressure is very great at present, the hopes are also very great. Four recent indicators can explain the issue.

...

Third, technological progress is markedly speeding up. One of the unfinished targets in the 11th Five-year Program was for research and development to account for over 2 percent of GDP, but the latest statistical data show that this target has now been realized; even more pleasing, enterprise investment in research and development investment has grown very rapidly. At the same time, the number of patent applications and the rate of patent growth in China have also been markedly enhanced, and this is a manifestation of technology. Under this trend, sectors spurring the conversion of technology into productive forces have become "soft shoot" sectors in the new normal.

...

In the course of macro regulation and control, the previous focal point was to promote economic growth, but what is wanted now is steady growth, not invariable pursuit of high speed.

...

From the perspective of division of work between government and market, the position of innovation is extremely important in the new normal in China's economy, but innovation is precisely a field beyond the government's strength; what the government should do is to create a favorable environment for innovation.

...

From another perspective, theoretically, given that China's urbanization level is not yet that high, there ought to be no decline in economic growth rate; this shows that our mechanism for promoting continual economic growth needs continuous innovating and perfecting.

Source: Ding Yifan, "国企改革中隐藏的玄机 (SOE Reform Holds Mysteries)," Jingji Shibao, May 21, 2014, <http://www.cet.com.cn/wzsy/gysd/1202823.shtml>

SOE Reform Holds Mysteries

...

All things considered, the following reasons account for the choice of SOE reform as the focus of government work in China.

...

Second, an important item in economic structural adjustment is to enhance technological innovation and attain certain technological breakthroughs to ensure growth in investment income. China's economic structure is the classic "catch-up" type. It lacks original technology and to an even greater extent it lacks channels to provide capital for the development of original technology. In other words, the absence of a mechanism for venture capital investment has limited China's ability to introduce new technology. However, state investment is often a type

Continued: China's Economic Rebalancing and Innovation

Conference, SOE reform was the topic of heated discussion. One reason for the debate was the importance of technological development for the country's continued economic growth. The country views its economic structure as a "classic catch-up type." It lacks original technology. It does not help matters that China's system relies on state investments, as opposed to venture capital investment. State investments tend to stifle innovation.

*According to the third article, SOEs have long been criticized for their low efficiency, bureaucracy, and even corruption. Hence, there is a push to reform the SOE system and somehow combine it with private capital. At this point China knows what it wants to do. However, it does not know how it will accomplish this. As China continues to muddle through, its economic uncertainty will continue into the foreseeable future. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

of substitute mechanism for venture capital investment in "catch-up" economies. After the government targets some industrial sectors, special incentive policies (i.e., industrial policies) are adopted to encourage investment in these sectors; SOEs are often the vehicles for this type of investment. SOE reform also includes the search for measures to stimulate SOEs to more successfully move toward technological innovation.

...

The specific direction of the next step in SOE reform remains a subject of popular speculation. In reality, the SOE reform program that was promulgated in Shanghai after the Third Plenum provides some clues to future SOE reform.

...

According to the program promulgated in Shanghai, SOEs fall into a minimum of three categories: public service-type enterprises, leading enterprises in technological innovation, and enterprises in competitive sectors. ... Service quality should be the principal indicator for evaluating public-interest enterprises, the ability to create new technology should be the principal indicator for innovation enterprises, and competitive enterprises are principally measured in terms of their profit situations.

Source: Zhou Xiaoyan, "Off Come the Shackles," Beijing Review, March 20, 2014, <http://goo.gl/ZuZ2ZD>

Off Come the Shackles

China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have long been criticized for their low efficiency, bureaucracy and even corruption.

...

Non-state capital will be allowed to participate in a number of projects in industrial areas such as banking, oil, electricity, railway, telecommunications, resource development and public utilities, Li said.

A reform plan released after the Third Plenum of the 18th Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee held last November pledged to let the market play a decisive role and recognized the private sector's role in fostering growth and creating jobs.

The decision adopted at the plenum said China shall actively develop a mixed ownership economy, allowing more SOEs and other firms to develop into mixed-ownership companies.

...

Opposites attract

... the most urgent task should be building a mixed-ownership economy and it's the one which will return the most immediate benefits.

... It's also useful for promoting deeper integration between state-owned and private capital and making the best of their respective advantages."

...

Lu Guiqing, Chairman of China Construction Fifth Engineering Division Corp. Ltd., said the time has come to step up reforms on China's SOEs by diversifying ownership.

...

"SOEs and private firms are vastly different. The former have more talent and are more organized while the latter are more flexible and can make quick decisions when facing market turbulence. By mixing them, SOEs will be stronger and more flexible and private firms will have more investment opportunities."

...

Chinese President Xi Jinping said developing a mixed-ownership economy represents an inevitable future trend. "The basic policy has been set forth. But the details haven't. The key lies in the details. Lessons must be learned from previous experiences. SOE reform should never become a chance for some people to embezzle state assets."

China's Drones: The Impact at Home and Abroad

12 August 2014

“In 2013 the UAV system was sent to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region People’s Government, which signed a contract for multiple types of UAV systems to further improve the capabilities to detect Xinjiang terrorists and sudden emergencies.”

OE Watch Commentary: In the past year the Chinese public has become more interested and supportive of the Chinese military using drones to target enemies both at home and abroad. According to an online poll after the U.S. eliminated Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud in a drone strike in Pakistan in November 2013, 75% of Chinese were in favor of the U.S. action (see OE Watch, November 2013, “Would China Carry Out a Strike in Pakistan?”). The Chinese government has sided with its ally Pakistan and criticized such drone strikes as a violation of Pakistan’s sovereignty, but, nonetheless, China’s military is also increasing its use of and interest in drones.

Currently China’s drone program appears to be for domestic security issues, but this could soon change. An article on 17 August on 163.com discussed an event that led to China deploying drones in Yarkand, a town near Kashgar in Xinjiang. According to the article, a team in Beijing rushed the drones to Yarkand after Uyghur militants stabbed to death dozens of people, after which the Chinese police killed more than 50 Uighurs. The drones, which arrived the day after the attack, were successfully deployed to conduct aerial surveillance on the hideouts of the attackers.

Other countries in the region will also notice China’s increase of use of drones. China may purport to use them only within China, but neighboring countries may doubt this. On 22 August India, for example, which has lost territory to China in the Himalayan region during wars since 1962, deployed six French-made Akash surface-to-air missile squads along the 4,057-km Line of Control (LoC) with China to deter Chinese drones and air force jets. China also deployed drones for the first time in Shanghai Cooperation Organization counterterrorism drills in the Inner Mongolia Province of China on 27 August. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



China now features drones regularly during military parades. Source: <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/890664-uighur-group-protests-chinas-drone-surveillance-in-xinjiang/>

Source: “Xinjiang Shache County: Special Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Search for Terrorists,” 163.com, 17 August 2014.

Xinjiang Shache County: Special Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Search for Terrorists

On August 1, the UAV systems technical support group from Beijing arrived at night in Kashgar. They drove in the night and the policemen rushed 190 kilometers to Shache County for intense work. Under the guidance of technical support group, police operators controlled drones and performed multiple tasks and continuous raids during the day and night.

In 2013 the UAV system was sent to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region People’s Government, which signed a contract for multiple types of UAV systems to further improve the capabilities to detect Xinjiang terrorists and sudden emergencies. In the first half of this year, the products have been delivered to the user. Another purpose is to help combat violent terrorist forces to ensure the Xinjiang Armed Police anti-terrorist command center has real-time communications.



Yilong (Pterodactyl)

Length: 9 meters
Range: 4,000 km
Max speed: 280 km/h
Max altitude: 5000 meters



Xianglong (Soaring Dragon)

Length: 14 meters
Range: 7,500 km
Max speed: 750 km/h
Max altitude: 17,300 meters

Sample Chinese drones. Source: <http://www.voanews.com/>

“It cannot be said that it was hacked just because it was WordPress...A lot depends on the specialist servicing the site”

OE Watch Commentary: *Cyber threats for the government of Kyrgyzstan may not often make news headlines, and, as the accompanying article shows, there are some specific reasons for this. The article discusses how the government of Kyrgyzstan’s official website was recently defaced and that a lack of funding for a secure content management system (the Kyrgyz government website uses WordPress) is one of the main reasons that these incidents take place. There is an interesting difference between what the government representative and the programmer interviewed for the article stated about website security. They both mentioned having to pay for good security, but the programmer added that a lot depends on the talent of the website specialist (programmer). The article cites several examples of other government websites being hacked (defaced) in the past.*

The article believes that an official website getting hacked is a significant issue, but the government may not see good security as much of a necessity if the website is largely for public information and not other purposes. The article does not mention what, if any, services were interrupted during any of the instances mentioned or if any sensitive information was taken from a government computer or server: the government of Kyrgyzstan may not readily admit if anything sensitive was compromised or lost. The article also talks about a group (or individual) called Clone Security from Uzbekistan, which defaced several government and other organizations’ websites in the region, including Kyrgyzstan’s Interior Ministry in February 2013, as an apparent act of revenge for the violence that took place in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. In April 2014 Clone Security claimed through its Twitter account that it no longer exists.

*Overall, cyber threats for the Kyrgyz government appear to be limited to websites getting hacked. Until there is a more serious breach or a past serious breach is revealed, this will continue to be the case. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***



“A screenshot of Kyrgyzstan’s Interior Ministry website as it looked on February 20, 2013 following a defacement by Clone Security with a message (in Russian with Latin letters) of ‘We are against racism.’”
Source: <https://twitter.com/CloneSecurity/status/304235193928151041/photo/1>

Source: Bakasheva, Begimay. “Сайт правительства в роли игрушки (The government website is a toy),” *Aziya News*, 28 August 2014.
http://www.gezitter.org/politic/32712_sayt_pravitelstva_v_rol_i_igrushki/

The Government Website Is a Toy

This past Sunday, the government’s website (www.gov.kg) was hacked...this is not the first hacking of government sites in Kyrgyzstan. The Interior and Foreign Ministry’s website were previously hacked...

(Bakasheva): Who hacked the government website?

(Melis Erzhigitov, at the Department of Information Policy of the government of Kyrgyzstan): It is difficult to say...even the websites of companies and banks in developed countries...we do not claim our government site is protected. A lot of money is required to set up good protection...

...the official website of the government operates on WordPress, a common platform...(Kyrgyz) programmer Murat Anvarbekov has said: “It cannot be said that it was hacked just because it was WordPress...A lot depends on the specialist servicing the site”...

(Bakasheva): “Could the government find a more secure platforms for websites of the ministries?”

(Anvarbekov): “...you have to pay for this...It is necessary to constantly update and improve protection.”

...In February last year the Uzbek group “Clone Security” hacked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website and put the Uzbek flag and their group logo on the main page...The group leaders said, “We did it to remind the opposition Uzbeks and Kyrgyz of 2010...Omurbek Abdyrakhmanov, a member of the Kyrgyz parliament, believes any laws will not be able to stop hackers. “These hackers could be sitting in China or India.”...

Kazakhstan's Defense Industry Moves into Ammunition Manufacturing?

18 August 2014

“It will produce pistol, and machine gun and rifle cartridges; production of ammunition will meet NATO standards”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Kazakhstan Defense Expo (KADEX 2014) in May 2014 demonstrated how the government has been working to diversify the country's inventory of weapons and equipment (see: September 2014 OE Watch, “The Impact of the Growth of Kazakhstan's Defense Industry”), but as the accompanying article shows, there could be additional plans and there are still some issues hindering development. The closed door meeting mentioned in the article between President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Defense Minister Serik Akhmetov may not be out of the ordinary, but Akhmetov is likely under pressure to further develop the country's defense industry and Armed Forces while combating corruption in both areas. Kazakh media have noted several high-profile cases of corruption in the Armed Forces related to procurement over the past few years, and Nazarbayev mentioned this corruption as a national security threat in an address earlier this year. Akhmetov was appointed Minister of Defense in April 2014 (he had been prime minister for two years before that) in an apparent effort to combat corruption, though another corruption case involving procurement emerged in September 2014.*



“Kazakh soldiers use a HMMWV (Humvee) and Russian small arms during an exercise in 2008. While Kazakhstan's armed forces have acquired vehicles like the Humvee or the Cobra (from Turkey), they continue to use Russian small arms and there has been no indication that they would change this.” Source: <http://www.sinodefenceforum.com/world-military-pictures/world-armed-forces-pictures-thread-53-1217.html>

*The article also mentions a government plan to build an ammunition factory and produce cartridges for small arms. One of the government's main goals for its defense industry has been to develop domestic manufacturing capabilities for weapons and equipment for use with the Kazakh Armed Forces and rely less on procurement from companies outside the country. The ammunition plant follows along with this goal, but the article notes a distinction in the kind of ammunition to be manufactured, specifically that it will meet NATO standards. The article does not mention it, but this could be a move into future ammunition sales to countries that use NATO-caliber small arms; Kazakhstan does not currently have small arms that use these. The article mentions a proposed plant to produce ammunition for Russian-caliber small arms (5.45, 7.62, and 9mm, the latter presumably Makarov) to be used by Kazakh forces; however, the article mentions that the plant “intended” to produce Russian-caliber ammunition, but has yet to open. There is no mention if the plant would produce NATO or Russian-caliber, or possibly both. If Kazakhstan moves into sales of ammunition, it may not take place for some time, but this could be an indication of a long-term goal for its defense industry. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

Source: Severniy, Vladimir. “В боевой готовности...(In combat readiness),” Megapolis, 18 August 2014. http://www.megapolis.kz/art/V_boevoj_gotovnosti

In preparation of war

On Wednesday August 13 last week, Nursultan Nazarbayev met with Defense Minister Serik Akhmetov...the long meeting took place behind closed doors...Akhmetov reported on the combat readiness of the armed forces...during the meeting with Nazarbayev, Akhmetov also drew attention to the importance of further development of the defense industry...The president put particular emphasis on the issue of ammunition production by Kazakh companies. “It is necessary to look carefully at what we can independently produce in Kazakhstan. I gave an order to produce cartridges in our country,” said Nazarbayev...

...Construction of the ammunition plant in Kazakhstan is planned to start next year... The creation of an enterprise to produce ammunition was already considered a few years ago...According to plans, it was intended to produce 5.45, 7.62, and 9mm cartridges for use in Kazakh security structures...

OE Watch Commentary: While incidents of violence on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border are taking place with increasing frequency, the accompanying article from a news source in Tajikistan provides some insight into how the situation continues to take shape following another incident on 25 August. The article summarizes what took place from a Tajik perspective, though there are a few things left out that are worth comparing to previous incidents. First, the incident did not take place in the same location as incidents in April 2013 and January and July 2014 (on the border near Tajikistan's Vorukh enclave). Instead, it happened on the border over 40 miles west (northwest) of the previous incidents. Second, this incident did not receive as much attention in Kyrgyz media and the coverage it did get focused on Kyrgyz political parties blaming each other for ineffective solutions to border problems in the Batken Province (Kyrgyzstan).

It is also worth noting how the article includes photographs (linked to a Flickr account) and an embedded video summary of what happened (from the YouTube channel of Asia-Plus). There have been some in Tajikistan commenting on how Kyrgyz media (in Russian) have had a stronger and wider reaching presence following past incidents and that Tajiks need to do a better job keeping up with these efforts. This article could be an indication of Tajik sources (in Russian) trying to reach a wider audience and present their perspective of events. Lastly, this incident can serve as an indicator of how much of the border is yet to be demarcated. On 27 August both governments reached an agreement to work together on construction of the road near Vorukh; Kyrgyz construction of this road was a contributing factor to tension that spilled over into the previous incidents. The two sides are hoping that joint construction (and even possible repositioning of border posts) near Vorukh would help resolve the problem, but as the article shows, there are other disputed border areas where infrastructure (in this case an irrigation canal) continues to cause violent incidents. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

(Top) "Infrastructure like this canal (foreground, parallel to the unpaved road) near the Kyrgyz-Tajik border has caused tension between communities on both sides of the border, which led to the shooting on August 25."

Source: <http://osh.turmush.kg/ru/news:72993>

(Bottom) "Kyrgyzstan's construction of the road near the Vorukh enclave will now include cooperation with Tajikistan; officials on both sides are hoping this cooperation will in turn lead to better demarcation of the border."

Source: <http://osh.turmush.kg/ru/news:74622>

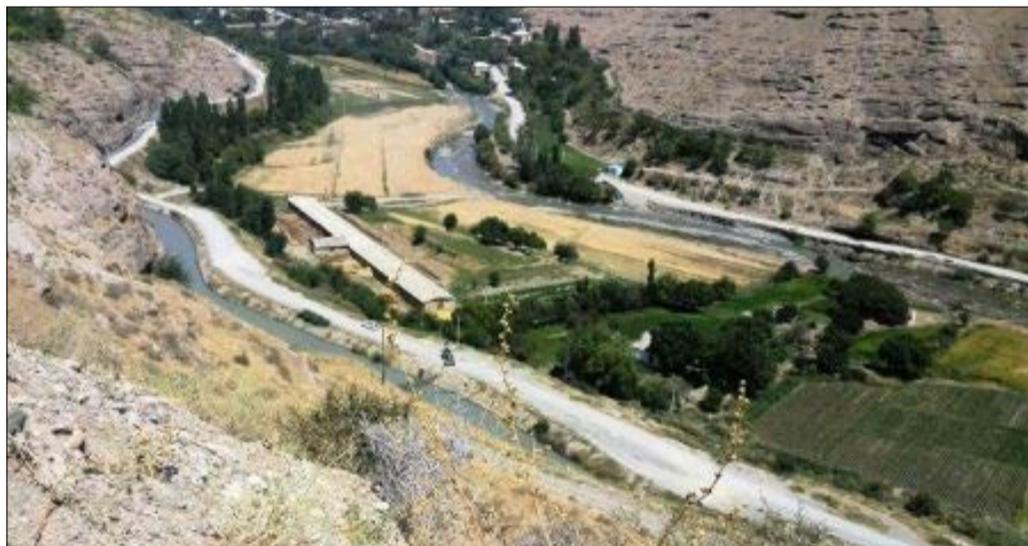
Source: Sharipov, Sheroz. "Первые жертвы (видео и фото) (The First Victims (video and photo))," Asia-Plus, 1 September 2014. <http://news.tj/ru/news/pervye-zhertvy-video-i-foto>

The First Victims

There was an armed incident on the evening of August 25 on the Tajik-Kyrgyz border in the Sughd province, Bobojonghafurov district. Two citizens of Tajikistan were killed and five were injured as a result of the shooting... Kyrgyz border guards accused the Tajiks of firing mortars... the border checkpoint is working normally; there are no restrictions on movement...

...three hours before the incident, there was a meeting of representatives of border guards from both sides... a source said that one victim in the incident was the commander of the border post and was shot from an elevated position... The shooting took place a few kilometers from the village of Suychi... alongside an unpaved road runs a canal, which, according to most of the villagers, is the source of the conflict... There was no indication that mortars were fired from Tajik territory, though (we) found a few Kalashnikov shell casings...

...According to the deputy chief doctor of the Bobojonghafurov district hospital, one of the wounded is still in intensive care with a jaw wound, while others are being treated and one escaped with minor wounds and was sent home...

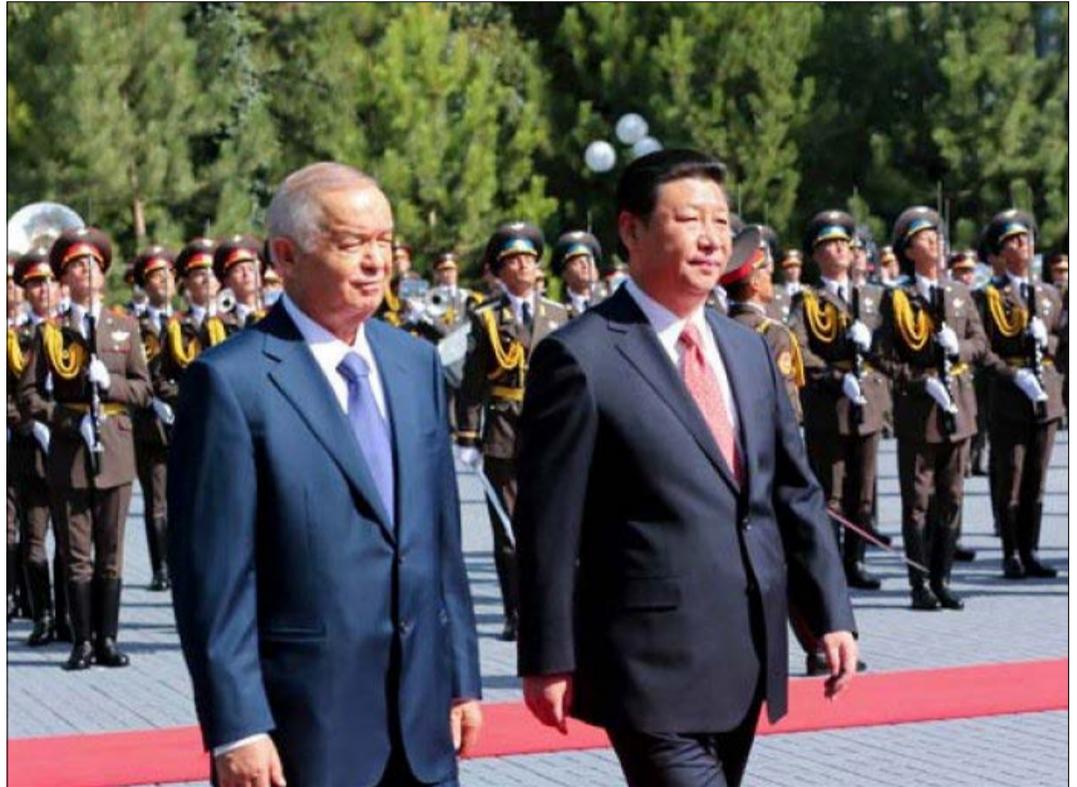


“Any shortcomings, even including presidential family corruption scandals, are nothing compared to the meeting's geopolitical successes.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 14 August the Uzbek news website, uznews.net, published an article about President Islam Karimov's visit to Beijing and official meeting with Chinese President and General Secretary of the Communist Party Xi Jinping. This was a reciprocal visit after Xi's visit to Tashkent before the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Kyrgyzstan in November 2013. The article noted that it was unique that Karimov's wife Tatiana accompanied him and suggested this was likely diplomatic protocol for such an important visit. However, in a country like Uzbekistan, where there is little transparency about Karimov's personal life, there are commonly rumors about Karimov and his family, including who will succeed him. As Karimov's daughter Gulnara was once considered to be a possible successor, there may be speculation as to whether there are deeper political implications to Tatiana Karimova's presence on this high-level visit.

The article's main focus, however, was on China's multimillion dollar investments in Uzbekistan, the China-Central Asia gas pipeline, and China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway. These are the types of initiatives the Uzbek military and government will want to bolster in the wake of growing Russian military and political pressure on Uzbekistan. In June 2014 a Russian foreign ministry spokesman announced Russia's support for Tajikistan to build the Rogun hydropower plant, which Uzbekistan says will have disastrous economic and ecological consequences for Uzbekistan and the region. In 2009, in contrast, Russia supported a regional consensus on the Rogun issue.

Most likely, Russia is trying to encourage Tajikistan to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) with its support for Rogun and show Uzbekistan that one of the consequences for its disinterest in the EEU is Russian support for the Rogun project. Uzbekistan therefore is seeking to offset Russia by tightening relations with China, as represented by Karimov's visit to Beijing. The continuing strategic partnership that Uzbekistan and China agreed to in 2012 will likely play a greater role in Sino-Uzbek affairs so long as Russian pressure forces Uzbekistan to counterbalance it. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



In September 2013 Chinese leader Xi Jinping paid a visit to Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan; one year later Karimov visited Xi in China in an effort to hedge against Russia in regional geopolitics. Source: <http://gbtimes.com/china/china-uzbekistan-deepen-energy-anti-terrorism-cooperation>

Source: “Islam Karimov on Official Visit to China with his Wife Tatiana,” uznews.net, 20 August 2014.

Islam Karimov on official visit to China with his wife Tatiana

The official state visit to China by the Uzbek president on 19-20 August is making a splash not only because it signifies a strengthening of the relationship between two countries, but also because of the Uzbek first lady's rare public appearance.

It is a well-documented fact that Tatiana Karimova did not participate in numerous past visits by her husband to other countries. Is this visit merely an indication of the Uzbek first lady's tribute to diplomatic protocol or has the Uzbek first couple reconciled their marital differences?

Karimov's current visit to China is also significant for the two countries commitments to closer cooperation.

The two presidents agreed to give priority to constructing the China-Central Asia natural gas pipeline, and speed up a railway project linking China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The Uzbek state news agency UzA reported on unspecified multi-million investments by China.

A Uzbek political observer commented on Karimov's present trip to China, that “any shortcomings, even including presidential family corruption scandals, are nothing compared to the meeting's geopolitical successes.”

German Weapons Exports to Iraq: a Prescription for Weapons Distribution?

OE Watch Commentary: According to the Stockholm International Peace Research, Germany was the third largest arms exporter between 2009 and 2013 and accounted for 7% of world deliveries. In the context of current German debates on weapons exports to northern Iraq, including G3 rifles and Milan missiles, the accompanying article includes several interesting cases in which exported weapons--according to the author-- have reappeared in various other international conflicts after their original delivery.

The article also points to two developments regarding attempts to restrain this fluidity of German weapons transfers. First, according to its last arms report, the German government is considering the introduction of post-shipment controls as used by the United States. Secondly, Federal Minister of Economics Sigmar Gabriel has taken a tougher stance than his predecessors by advocating that countries that are not members of NATO or the European Union and are also not considered to be allies should only receive German weapons by exception.

As the article points out, the majority of Germans oppose the German government's decision to supply arms to the Kurds in northern Iraq. They conclude that the weapons exported there will not remain in Iraq.

End OE Watch Commentary (Chadwick)

Source: ATA, M. "Deutsche Waffenexporte: Von Hand zu Hand zu Hand (German Weapons Exports: from hand to hand to hand)," Frankfurter Allgemeine, 16 September 2014. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/naher-osten/mit-deutschen-waffen-wird-noch-jahre-nach-der-ausfuhr-gekaempft-13152045.html>

"Last year, Germany exported weapons worth 5.85 billion Euro (approximately 7.59 billion Dollars). Whether they will indeed remain with the recipient or will be passed on is not controlled by anyone. The recipient countries merely have to sign a declaration of final destination in which they obligate themselves not to resell the weapons without German agreement."

"Weapons survive long, considerably longer than many regimes. If a dictator rises to power, a revolution breaks out or Islamists take over parts of the country, the weapons fall into the wrong hands."

"The military equipment that Germany is now sending to the Kurdish Peshmerga in northern Iraq will with a considerable probability not remain in their hands. A part will go to the friendly fighters of the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK). If it goes really bad, the IS terrorist will capture the weapons. And if the Kurds are victorious, they will perhaps soon use their firepower to fight for their own state."

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

By Alisa Moldavanova

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

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



EU Halts Expansion In The Face of Internal Issues

11 September 2014

“The President-elect of the European Commission ... announced on Wednesday that the EU will not expand over the next five years.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The European Union (EU) is seeking to address several issues within its membership, namely increasing financial problems, skepticism on the benefits of newly integrated members, and Russia’s recent international exploits. The EU’s recently announced shift away from any expansion in the next five years will allow it to focus on bolstering its economy and financial strength.*

This shift is highlighted by the recently renamed “Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborly Relations” to “Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations,” as well as the creation of four new commissions regarding the EU’s internal market and industry, taxation and customs, consumer policy, and financial services.

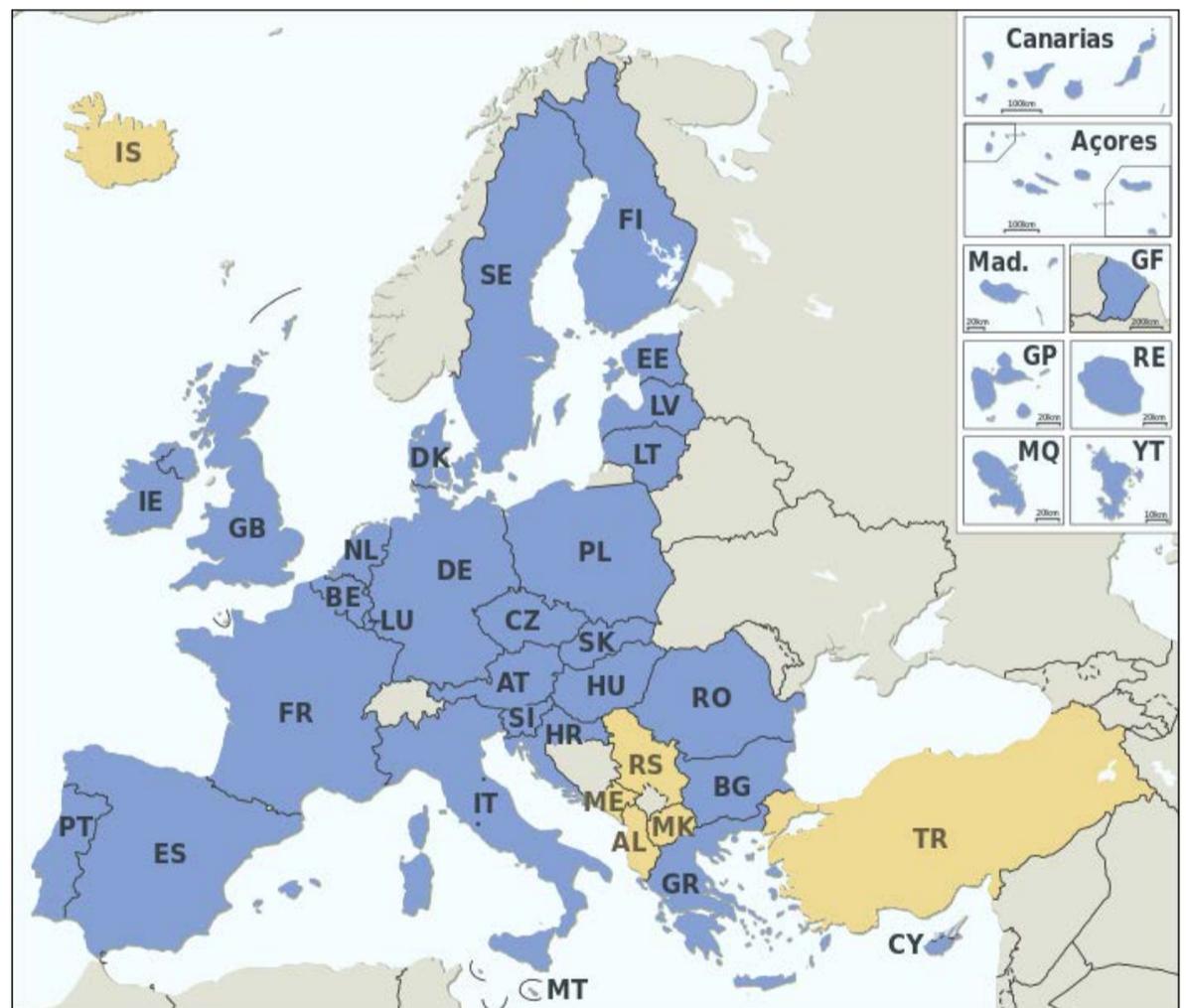
*However, halting integration for the next five years leaves some EU hopefuls without one of their strongest incentives to address necessary internal reforms. Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Albania are all EU candidates currently confronting political and social issues, such as the Serb-Kosovar contention on sovereignty. The reforms within these non-EU countries may be affected without the prospect of membership anytime in the near future. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)***

Source: “Erebara, Gjergj. “Fatigued EU Downgrades Enlargement Portfolio” Balkan Insight. 11 September 2014. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/eu-downgrades-its-enlargement-portfolio-1>

“The President-elect of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker announced on Wednesday that the EU will not expand over the next five years.

...The European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations portfolio, under Johannes Hahn, next to a reinforced neighbourhood policy, puts the focus on the continuation of enlargement negotiations, whilst acknowledging that there will be no enlargement of the European Union for the next five years,” the Commission said.

... Juncker in his speech said that the 27-member Commission would put Europe “back on the track of economic growth and create new jobs”.



EU Member states and Candidate countries. Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org>

Blogger Names Units Operating in/around Ukraine, Identifies Possible Bigger Problem

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian language blogosphere has been set ablaze by commentaries both pro and con about Russia's involvement in Ukraine. The accompanying blog post from Live Journal has compiled a listing of suspected Russian units operating in and around Ukraine. It must be noted, however, that the blog admits that its information may not be 100% accurate, since "it is being confirmed by the fragmentary statements, which are arriving from the Ministry of Defense and journalists' articles."*

In addition to troop dispositions, the author of the post makes an interesting observation about the treatment of casualties on both sides of the border. In Ukraine the wounded and dead are treated as heroes, while in Russia there is no mention of casualties, only surreptitious military funerals with little or no discussion of the circumstances surrounding the service members' death.

*The Kremlin-sponsored nationalism enveloping Russia at the moment may lead to an "official" invasion if ordinary Russians wish to openly recognize their military's achievements. However, domestic pressure to recognize Russia's activities in Ukraine runs counter to current Russian foreign policy of not meddling in the internal matters of another sovereign nation. The unwritten cornerstone tenet of the Shanghai Cooperative Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which Russia founded, is that internal matters and even discussion of internal matters of other states is forbidden (unlike the OSCE and other Western institutions). If domestic pressures require Russia to acknowledge its actions in Ukraine, Russia could not only face greater condemnation and sanctions from the West, but also increasing criticism from traditional allies to the South and East. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: "Peacekeeping' Forces of Russia," Live Journal (Russian Language blog site), posted 26 August 2014, <http://zpolk-org.livejournal.com/>, accessed 12 September 2014.

'Peacekeeping' Forces of Russia

The news has spread throughout the world: NATO has acknowledged the Russian troops' invasion into Ukraine. And then information about Gruz-200 [deceased soldier] has begun to increasingly appear on social networks. Yesterday an article with the title "Gruz-200 from Ukraine to Russia" by Yelena Vasilyeva, the chairman of the board of MKTs [Interregional Coordination Center] "Forgotten Regiment", was published on Ekho Moskvyy and generated heated arguments. And the funerals of the deceased airborne troops that took place near Pskov set agog the entire blogosphere

Any military operations assume losses from both belligerent parties. Ukrainian central television channels broadcast the burials of deceased military personnel in some or other rayon every day.

Russian television channels maintain a funereal silence, while thinking that the unnamed heroes don't need this glory and humane burials.

The participants of combat operations of various local and international wars and conflicts are at Interregional Coordination Center "Forgotten Regiment". And we know for certain what it means for relatives to receive a Gruz-200. We still commemorate our deceased combat brothers. And we think that it is impermissible that soldiers, who have been sent to fight in another country, were forgotten by their relatives. This is not as others do.

The most complex matter for the relatives of the deceased – is to find and bring them home and commit their bodies to the earth. As a rule, no one knows where a military unit, in which their son, husband, or brother serves, can be redeployed.

Therefore, we are publishing the information that has arrived at our disposal about which troops have been concentrated in the areas of Ukraine's combat operations. We hope that this will become a definite reference point for the relatives, who are concerned about the fates of their relatives who are serving in the Army.

For obvious reasons, this information cannot be absolutely 100 percent accurate. But it is being confirmed by the fragmentary statements, which are arriving from the Ministry of Defense and journalists' articles.

(continued)



(Above) CSTO Emblem. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_Security_Treaty_Organization



(Below) SCO Emblem. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_Cooperation_Organisation

Continued: Blogger Names Units Operating in/around Ukraine, Identifies Possible Bigger Problem

Ground Troops and Artillery:

- Battalion Tactical Group (BTG) of the 18th Motorized Rifle Brigade, Khankala/Kalinovskaya, Chechnya
- BTG of the 17th Motorized Rifle Brigade, Chechnya, Shali
- BTG of the 136th Motorized Rifle Brigade, Botlikh, Dagestan
- BTG of the 205th Motorized Rifle Brigade, Budennovsk, Stavropol Kray
- BTG of the 19th Motorized Rifle Brigade, Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia
- BTG of the 7th Military Base in Abkhazia, Georgia
- BTG of the 33rd Mountain Motorized Rifle Brigade, Maykop, Adygeya
- Artillery Task Force Battalion of the 291st Artillery Brigade, Troitskaya, Ingushetia
- Company Task Force of the 78th Logistics Support Brigade, Budennovsk, Stavropol Kray
- Battalion Tactical Groups (BTGs) and Company Tactical Groups(CTGs) and artillery battalions of the 20th Motorized Rifle Brigade, Volgograd
- 34th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Mountain), Karachayevo-Cherkesiya;
- Artillery Battalion (Uragan Multiple Rocket Launcher System) of the 943rd Artillery Regiment, Krasnooktyabrskoye, Adygeya;
- Artillery Battalion (Tochka-U and Iskander-M) of the 1st Missile Brigade
- 23rd Motorized Rifle Brigade, Samara
- 106th Division, Tula.
- BTG/CTG of the 56th Air Assault Brigade, Volgograd

From the Airborne (VDV)

- BTG of the 76th Division, Pskov
- BTG of the 98th Division, Ivanovo
- BTG of the 45th Separate Spetsnaz Regiment, Kubinka (Moscow)
- BTG of the 247th Regiment of 7th Division, Novorossiysk

Company Tactical Groups(CTGs) and Saboteur-Reconnaissance Teams (SRTs) of the Main Intelligence Directorate

- 10th Spetsnaz Brigade, Molkino, Krasnodar Kray
- 22nd Spetsnaz Brigade, Aksay, Rostov Oblast
- 100th Experimental Reconnaissance Brigade, Mozdok, North Ossetia
- 346th Spetsnaz Brigade, Prokhladnyy, Kabardino-Balkaria
- 25th Spetsnaz Regiment, Stavropol
- 2nd Spetsnaz Brigade, Pskov
- 16th Spetsnaz Brigade, Tambov
- 3rd Spetsnaz Brigade, Ulyanovsk

Russia Plans on Big Investments in Satellite Technologies, Sanctions Permitting

19 August 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian Federation has made space and satellite technologies a high priority for its commercial and military development. It is in the process of updating its constellation of global positioning satellites (GLONASS), but has had several setbacks. Aside from the problems normally associated with getting the satellites into space and a lack of sufficient ground relay stations to account for atmospheric conditions, Russia has suffered from several quality control issues. The next generation of GLONASS satellites, the GLONASS-K series, has had its deployment delayed due to problems with the cesium atomic clocks that are essential for their effective operation. In addition to quality control problems with individual satellites, the GLONASS system suffered two system outages in April, when the entire constellation was unable to provide navigation data, in one instance (on 2 April) for ten hours.*

The system has also experienced problems of a less technical nature. In 2011 the Russian Space Systems Joint-Stock Company (RKS), the lead organization for development of the GLONASS system, was embroiled in a scandal when it was revealed that 565 million rubles had been pilfered from the company's coffers, resulting in the resignation of its CEO, Yuriy Urlichich. The sum of these individual problems has damaged the GLONASS brand, and has

Source: Ivan Cheberko, "Roskosmos Requests 358.6 Billion for Satellite Monitoring of Earth," *Izvestiya Online*, 19 August 2014, <http://www.izvestia.ru/>, accessed 12 September 2014.

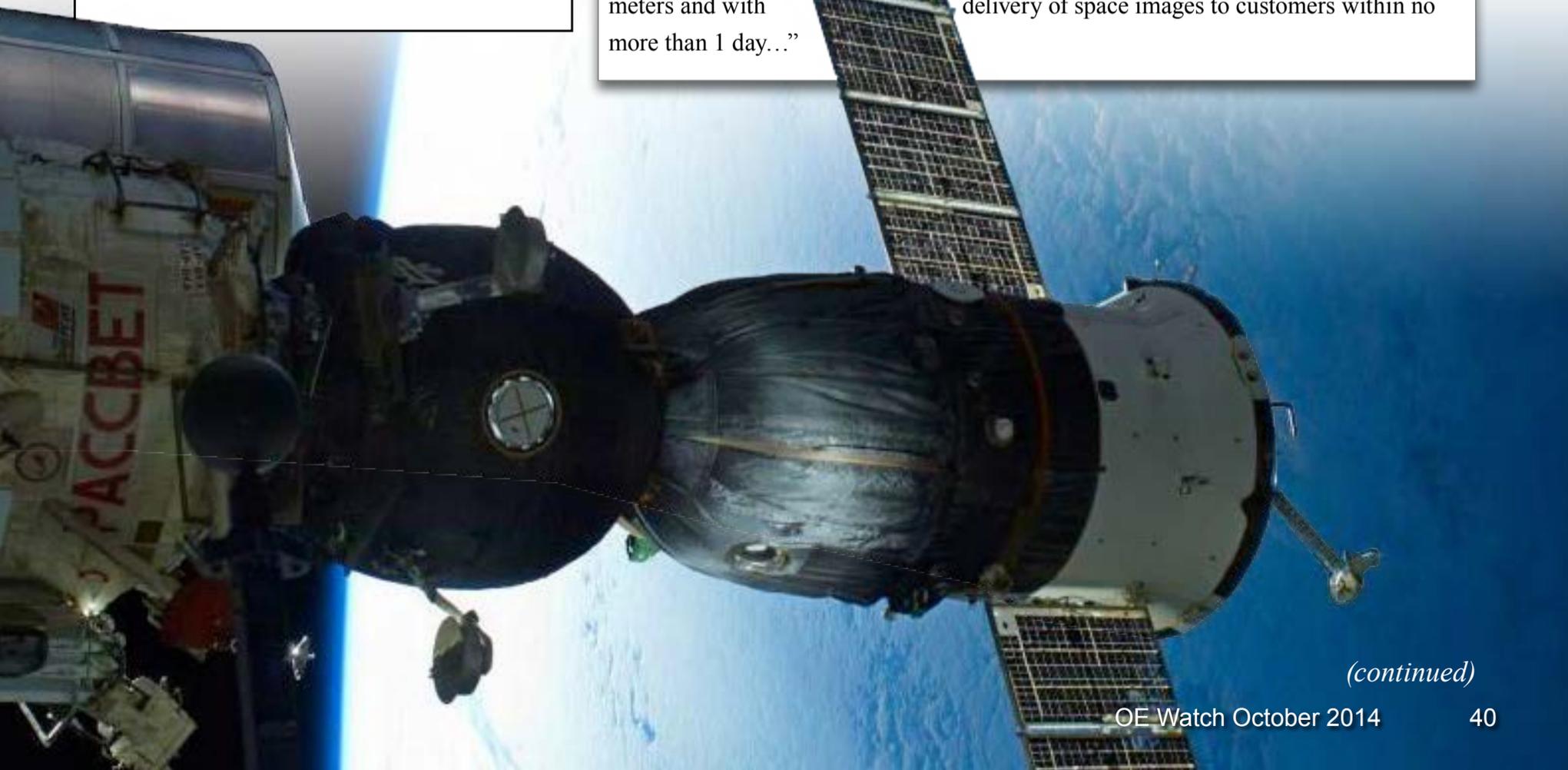
Roskosmos Requests 358.6 Billion for Satellite Monitoring of Earth

Roskosmos is requesting over 350 billion rubles to be allocated to the creation of an ultramodern national satellite array in 2016-25 to monitor the Earth's surface, oceans, and atmosphere.

"The orbital fleet devoted to 'Remote Earth Sensing' will be increased to 26 new-generation satellites, which will fully conform to the volume and quality of tasks being addressed..."

The new-generation Remote Earth Sensing group will facilitate the solution of several tasks. Thus, the natural resource satellite fleet will enable periodic observations of any region of the Russian Federation at least twice daily. "The natural resource satellites will be fitted with dedicated surveillance equipment with a range of 0.35 to 16 microns with maximum spatial resolution in the panchromatic range from 0.4 meters and a swath width of 19 km, which will provide Russia with guaranteed access to the international market in space hardware and services and emerging markets in remote sensing..."

In 2016-25, Roskosmos also plans to resolve the task of obtaining images of the Earth from space in high and very high resolution. The draft Federal Space Program refers to "information of superhigh (less than 0.5 meters), detailed (0.5-1 meters), high (1-5 meters), medium (5-10 meters), and broad resolution (10.0 to 50.0 meters) in the spectral ranges 0.35-16 microns at intervals of no fewer than once in several days." This task will be met by a system of three satellites fitted with optoelectronic devices of "high and very high spatial resolution of 0.4 meters in the visible and 1.6 meters in multispectral channels from an altitude of 700 km in sun-synchronous orbit with coordinate precision no greater than 5-10 meters and with delivery of space images to customers within no more than 1 day..."



(continued)

Continued: Russia Plans on Big Investments in Satellite Technologies, Sanctions Permitting

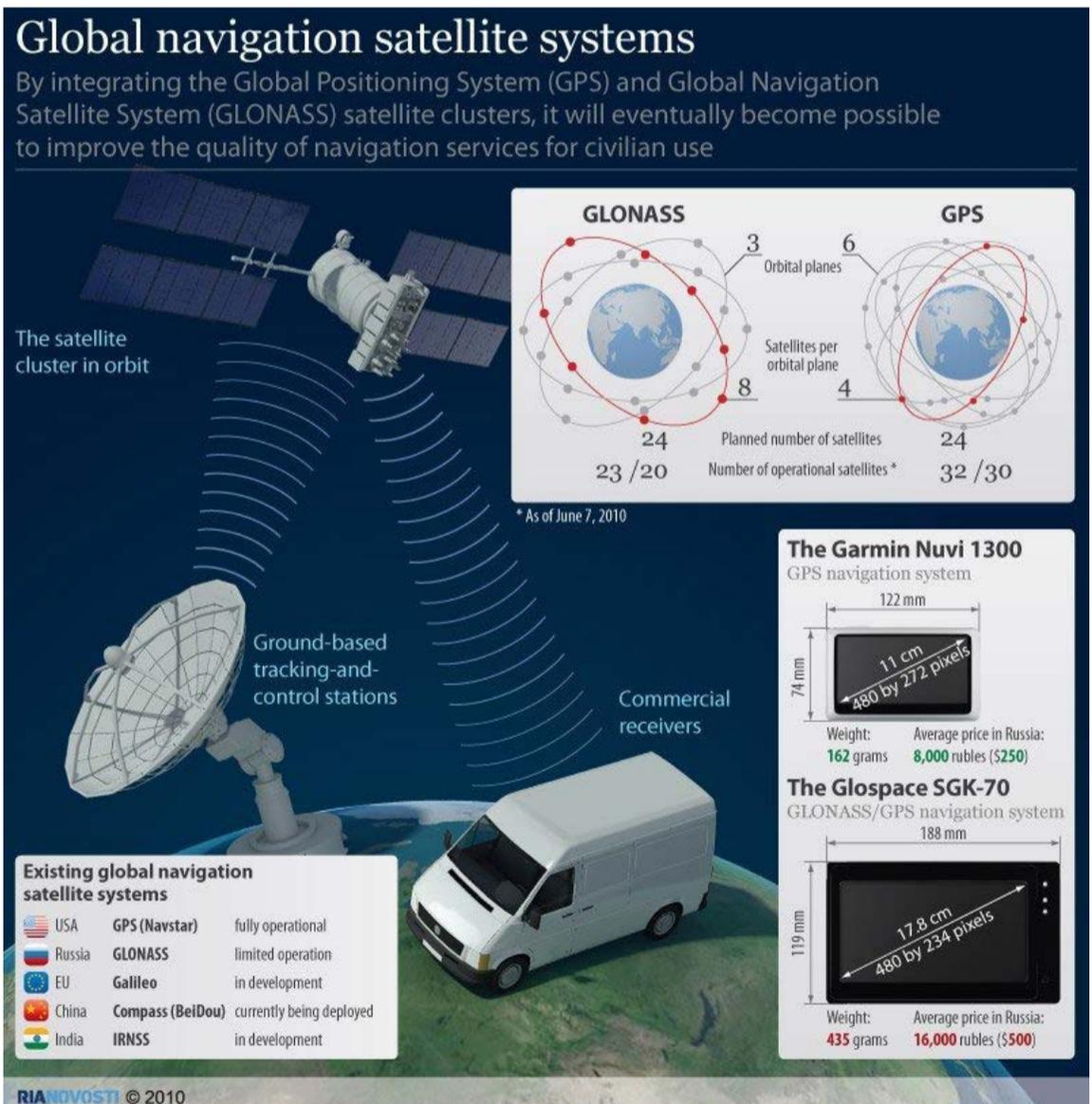
caused consumers to be more likely to use the more dependable U.S. GPS system, and could lead to the GLONASS constellation falling into a distant fourth place in the world use as the European Galileo and Chinese BeiDou satellite constellations come on line for world navigation.

The accompanying article discusses Russian efforts to further bolster its space capabilities. Russia is keenly interested in improving its remote sensing capabilities by fielding its next generation of panchromatic, multispectral, and synthetic aperture radar remote sensing systems. The Russian space industry is advanced, but like most advanced industries in other parts of the world, it utilizes foreign-made components for purposes of cost and economies of scale. Despite official announcements from Moscow, due to current and possible future sanctions the Russian space industry may have difficulty meeting the requirements mentioned with solely Russian-produced components at the price points suggested in the accompanying article. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

The most costly and biggest work set out by Roskosmos in the Remote Earth Sensing section is the project for a space system carrying out real-time monitoring of local emergencies, comprising 10 satellites in sun-synchronous orbits “providing all-weather, round-the-clock monitoring of local emergency situations on the territory of the Russian Federation with a periodicity of no less than twice daily” The cost of this project is estimated at 106.3 billion rubles...

Roskosmos is planning to get a total of 358.6 billion rubles for all the projects involving Remote Earth Sensing. Today, Remote Earth Sensing, along with communication and broadcasting satellites, remains a “weak point” of the Russian space industry...

“I’m afraid the developers promise the maximum, and as always will adjust the program in accordance with the realities,” the expert believes. “The Federal Space Program developers are in the unenviable situation where we do not know what will happen tomorrow with this sanctions regime, and their task is to create a 10-year program. From all this I see only one outcome as to make the program public and up for discussion. First of all this is in the best interests of Roskosmos itself.”



Source: <http://en.ria.ru/infographics/20100610/159371756.html>

Russia Plans to Create New Strategic Command for the Arctic

11 September 2014

Source: Vladimir Gundarov, "Russia's New Line of Defense Will Run via the North Pole: A Joint Strategic Command Is Being Formed for the Arctic," Nezavisimaya Gazeta Online, 11 September 2014, <http://www.ng.ru/armies/2014-09-11/2_north.html>, accessed 12 September 2014.

OE Watch Commentary: *One of former Russian Defense Minister Anatoli Serdykov's most far-reaching reforms was the consolidation of the six Soviet-era military districts into four joint strategic commands (OSKs) in December of 2010. As the accompanying article describes, Russia is now adding a new OSK to its order of battle, in the Arctic, which is planned to be operational by January 2015. The creation of this new OSK is likely due to global warming and better technologies that the Russian Federation believes generate better opportunities for trans-Arctic shipping and fossil fuel exploitation in the resource-rich Arctic.*

Russia has made great efforts to increase its physical presence in the region to more effectively stake out its claims to these resources in this hotly (no pun intended) contested area. It has had several high profile military visits to the areas ranging from airborne operations to long-range bombers conducting refueling operations to increased naval presence, and there is even the refurbishment of existing, and construction of new military facilities. In short, Russia's new Arctic OSK is the latest in many recent efforts to secure its claims to the Arctic. End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

A Joint Strategic Command Is Being Formed for the Arctic

The Northern Fleet will before 1 December be withdrawn from the Western Military District, it will become the principal strike force of the new Joint Strategic Command (JSC) North formed for defense of Russia's interests in the Arctic. ITAR-TASS was informed of this by a source in the Russian Federation Defense Ministry.

The new force contingents are being formed in accordance with the Arctic 2020 strategic program approved last year. "JSC North will be composed of a number of units and force groupings of other services and combat arms of the RF Armed Forces, which also will be withdrawn from Western MD command," he observed. The source says that the formation of the new command will be completed by the end of the year, it will have the status of fifth military district, although it will not be called such officially. "The force contingents which will constitute JSC North are to have been fully provided with arms, equipment, and all other resources by 1 October and 100 percent manned by 30 December of this year," the source specified.

"Aside from the Northern Fleet and other units and subunits removed from the Western MD, JSC North will be composed also of new contingents to be deployed in the Arctic zone, on Novaya Zemlya, the New Siberian Islands, Franz Josef Land, and Wrangel Island included," the source added. The command, he says, will be composed of other existing services and combat arms in the formation's permanent deployment locations and also of other security entities.

The 1st Air and Air Defense Command, specifically the 1st Air and Space Defense Troops, the 531st, 583d, and 1258th air defense missile regiments, the 331st and 332d radio-technical regiments, and other units stationed in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk oblasts could be transferred wholly or partially to the operational jurisdiction of JSC North.

A tactical group of the Northern Fleet has already embarked on a permanent basis on the performance of assignments on the New Siberian Islands archipelago. The group is composed of coastal missile and air defense missile elements and also elements of the radar coverage of the environment and logistic support.

The Central and Eastern military districts have to be involved in combat and logistic support for the activity of the North contingent. For example, the Eastern MD is before 1 October to have fully ensured the readiness of base compounds on Wrangel Island and Cape Schmidt for servicemen's habitation and performance of their assignments.

JSC North will interact with troops of the Northwest Regional Command of the MVD of Russia Interior Troops and regional border directorates of the FSB, under whose auspices the RF FSB Arctic Regional Border Directorate could be restored.

"Organization and staffing will be undertaken based on a decision of the defense minister and in accordance with a directive of the chief of the RF Armed Forces General Staff," ITAR-TASS's source said. The new command will be operationally directed by the RF National Defense Command Center. "JSC North's area of responsibility in its upper part will include the North Pole, the line of demarcation in the south with the Pacific Fleet has not yet been definitively established," the source concluded.

General of the Army Dmitriy Bulgakov, deputy defense minister, announced earlier that the ministry would before the end of September complete the delivery for the troops in the Arctic of the stocks of resources, including equipment and arms. He says that an 18-month supply of POL, food, clothing, and medical equipment has already been built in the region.

Contrasting Russian Perspectives on Beslan, 10 Years Later

1 September 2014

OE Watch Commentary: 1 September 2014 marked the tenth anniversary of a tragic event that shocked Russia and the North Caucasus—a terrorist seizure of an elementary school in the town of Beslan in North Ossetia. The terrorists took hostage over 1,000 people, primarily children, and held them in the school gymnasium. After several days of a stand-off between the terrorists and the Russian authorities, Russian security forces entered the school building and opened fire. A blaze of fire engulfed the school gymnasium shortly after that. In the end, over 300 people, primarily children, died. Many know this event as the Beslan siege, or the Beslan massacre. To this day, Russian citizens have more questions than answers about what really happened.

The accompanying excerpts present two different Russian perspectives looking back ten years later at the horrific days of the siege. The first is a long first-hand account, published in Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Russia Service, by Russian military correspondent Vladimir Voronov, who was in Beslan during the siege. “My very first impression back then - full managerial chaos,” he writes. And yet, he observes, “the soot from the burnt school had not yet settled, and everything was already clear to the prosecutors.” He writes that many key questions about Beslan still remain unanswered.

Since this tragedy occurred, other Kremlin-sponsored media have been less critical of the rescue operation, emphasizing instead the courage and determination of security personnel to rescue survivors. For instance, an article published in state-owned RIA Novosti presents the official Kremlin viewpoint, which is shorter than the former, clear, and raises no questions, from the Kremlin’s perspective, about the event: “On September 1, 2004 in the town of Beslan, North Ossetia-Alania, a terrorist group of more than 30 people (among whom were women), led by Rasul Khachbarov (also known as The Colonel), carried out the seizure of the building of secondary school №1.”

Together, on this sad anniversary, these excerpts illustrate the differences between the official, somewhat antiseptic Kremlin account of the Beslan massacre, and that of a still traumatized public view. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

Source: Vladimir Voronov, “С террористами не договариваются, не так ли? Beslan 10 лет спустя.” (No Negotiations With Terrorists, Right? Beslan 10 Years Later), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Russia Service, 1 September 2014. <http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/26559470.html>

...During these events [of Beslan siege], I was near the school seized by the terrorists, reaching Beslan on September 2, 2004. My very first impression back then - full managerial chaos. If the school – there are the terrorists and hostages, then all around - complete anarchy. Superiors – a ton of them, both local and federal, but no one is in charge of anything. Therefore it already comes as no particular surprise that even 10 years after the official version of what happened is punctured by gaping black holes of uncertainty and omissions...

The soot from burnt the school had not yet settled, and everything was already clear to the prosecutors. Namely: those who ordered the terrorist attack – were Maskhadov and Basayev, there were 32 terrorists, their squad was put together haphazardly in a few days. On 30-31 August 2004 the militants gathered in a grove near the Ingush village Psedakh (Malgobek district of Ingushetia), and then in the early morning of September 1 moved towards Beslan. Moreover, if you believe the prosecutors, all 32 bandits fit in a single GAZ-66 truck, with a carrying capacity of two tonnes

Unanswered remains the question of who actually was the organizer of the terrorist attack ... Several former hostages indicate that among the bodies of the militants presented to them for identification were ones they had not seen in school.

Source: “Захват заложников в школе №1 города Беслана в сентябре 2004 года,” (Hostage-Taking in Beslan’s School No. 1 in September 2004), RIA Novosti, 1 September 2014 <http://ria.ru/spravka/20140901/1021728356.html>

On September 1, 2004 in the town of Beslan, North Ossetia-Alania, a terrorist group of more than 30 people (among whom were women), led by Rasul Khachbarov (also known as The Colonel), carried out the seizure of the building of secondary school №1.

During the festivities held in the courtyard of the institution a truck drove up and suddenly armed men jumped out of it and opened fire with automatic weapons over the heads of the crowd, and began to round up everyone into the building. Only few were able to avoid the fate of becoming hostages, taking advantage of the surrounding panic....

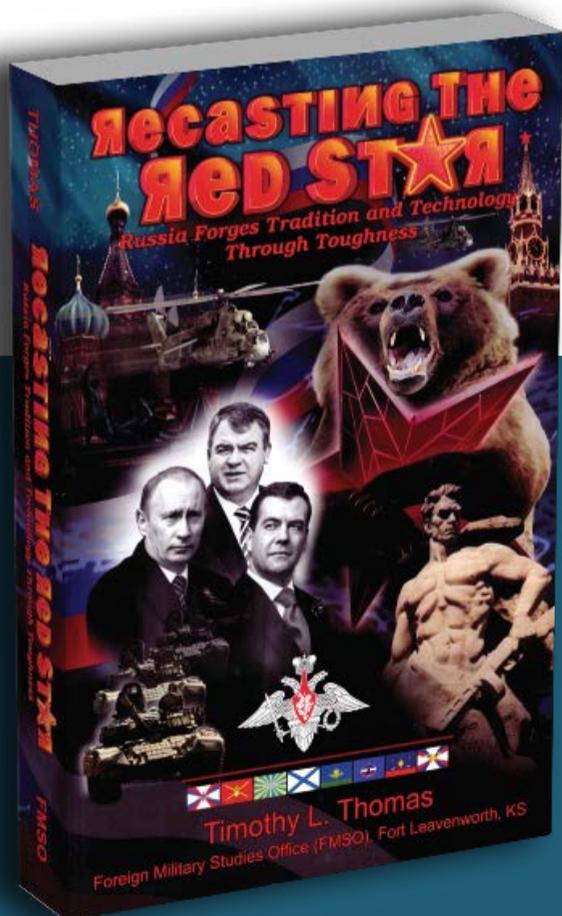
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The Militarization of **GAZPROM**

By Cindy Hurst, FMSO

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

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



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

Russia's Reasons to Provide Arms to Iraq

1 September 2014

OE Watch Commentary: In July 2014 the Iraqi central government, lacking the military resources to stop the steady advance of the al-Qaeda-funded Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the country, turned to Russia, ostensibly because US fighter jets were arriving too slowly. Russian assistance, however, came immediately.

The accompanying excerpts provide additional information regarding Russian-Iraqi military relations, as reported in the Russian press. The first is a report in Lenta.ru (Ribbon) about additional Russian weaponry and expert advice Russia has provided to Iraq to fight ISIS. Specifically, referencing the Iraqi Ministry's official announcement, the article reports that Russia sent Iraq another tranche of Mi-28NE "Night Hunter" attack helicopters. The Kremlin will also be providing Russian expertise to service the helicopters.

The second excerpt is from an interview Iraqi Ambassador to Russia Shafiq Muhsin gave to Russian Interfax's deputy chief foreign policy editor, Andrei Baranovskiy. Shafiq discusses Iraq's decision to turn to Russia and the state of Russian-Iraqi military cooperation. Describing the current Russian-Iraqi military cooperation in a positive light, the ambassador said that Iraq was looking to diversify its arms sources for years. It made sense to turn to Russia, since Iraq had depended on the Soviet Union for arms for years, and then on Russia after the Soviet Union collapsed. He also added, "We had agreed upon military contracts with Russia, and these are serious, major agreements. And the response was very quick, so the US had to act with the same speed, and also seek to enter into arms contracts with us,"

As for Moscow's interests, the Kremlin had been working for years to regain a strong foothold in Iraq, and the opportunity to become a steady arms supplier certainly helps in this regard, no matter what government Iraq ends up with. Russia also has major energy interests in Iraq, which gives it additional reasons to get involved there.

Moscow has been working to regain major energy contracts in Iraq since 2003. With regard to energy, Iraq is also linked with Syria and Iran, as far as the Kremlin is concerned. In 2010 Iraq, Iran, and Syria inked a \$10 billion deal to construct a natural gas pipeline connecting Europe with Iran's South Pars field, set to open between 2016 and 2018 (the dates vary, depending on press reports). At the same time, Qatar, which holds the world's second-largest gas fields, plans an alternate supply route to Europe — through Iraq and Turkey, bypassing Syria and Iran. Such a route, if it were to materialize, would successfully reduce European dependence on Russia's gas. Russia, through Iraq, can maintain its influence over this pipeline and, therefore, over Europe, a traditional primary consumer of Russian energy. This gives Moscow an added reason to stay involved in Iraq. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

Source: "Ирак получил партию «Ночных охотников»,» (Iraq Received New Tranche of Night Hunters), Lenta.ru (Ribbon), 1 September 2014 <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/09/01/havociraq/>

Iraq received another batch of Russian attack helicopters Mi-28NE "Night Hunter." This was reported on the country's [Iraqi's] Defense Ministry web-site.

The total number of helicopters is not specified. In the video in the agency's press release at least three machines are visible. All helicopters are delivered in half-disassembled condition. Among others, Russian specialists are involved in tech support for them.

As noted, the "Night Hunters" will be used to fight against the separatists from the group "Islamic state." In addition to fire support, the helicopters will also be used to deliver aid in blocked areas...

Source: Andrei Baranovskiy, "Посол Ирака в РФ: Россия снабдила нас авиатехникой и оружием для борьбы с террористами" (Iraqi Ambassador in Russia: Russia has provided us with aircraft and weapons to fight terrorists), Russian Interfax, 28 August 2014. <http://www.interfax.ru/393822>

We believe that even the US itself, with its enormous military, technological and economic potential, is unable to deal with terrorism alone, without the aid of large and small countries.

Due to the latest terrorist attacks, Iraq turned to Russia with a request to provide types of military equipment Iraq was lacking. Russia responded very quickly at the most crucial moment in our fight against terrorists and provided us with aircraft and other types of weapons necessary to fight the terrorists. This speaks to the successful cooperation between the two countries. Iraq appreciates Russia's friendly attitude and its support in this difficult time for our country to combat terrorism....

The Iraqi government in recent years has been focused on the diversification of arms sources, we were open for signing contracts with any suppliers of weapons that meets the requirements of the Iraqi army. Because for many years it depended on the Soviet and then - and still depends - on Russian arms, then, of course, it is natural that Iraq is turning to Russia for making deal to equip the Iraqi army with weapons and organization of training for Iraqi personnel. Indeed, experience has shown that this course was chosen correctly, because Russia has provided great discounts.

We had agreed upon military contracts with Russia, and these are serious, major agreements. And the response was very quick, so the US had to act with the same speed, and also seek to enter into arms contracts with us...

Serb Volunteers Aid Russians in Ukraine

20 August 2014

“He said that he owed NATO payback for what had happened in Serbia in the war in 1999 when he was a soldier in the Yugoslav Army.”

OE Watch Commentary: Since Russia’s move to annex Crimea in early March 2014, pro-Russian separatist forces in Ukraine have been assisted by volunteers from Russia and other countries. Some of the most proficient and colorful volunteers have come from Serbia, which, because of its Orthodox affinity, has shared a long and close relationship with Russia. Indeed, in 1914 Russia declared war against Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire partially because of its close ties to Serbia. In the 1990s Russian volunteers fought alongside their Serbian comrades as Yugoslavia fell apart. Today, according to the accompanying excerpts, Serbian volunteers feel compelled to assist the pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine. Watch the first five minutes of this video for a sample of how Serbian volunteers helped with Russia’s seizure of Crimea: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFILN9E2kcY>

The first accompanying excerpt (from a Serbian source) inadvertently points out some of the economic motives behind Serbian involvement. The Serbian volunteer described in the article talks about how he was cheated by his Serbian employer after helping to construct facilities for the Sochi Winter Olympics in Russia. Lacking the funds to return home and hearing of a possible “NATO invasion” of Crimea, he felt compelled to help protect his Russian comrades. Revenge was also a factor, as “he said that he owed NATO payback for what had happened in Serbia in the war in 1999.” That this Serbian article falls in the realm of propaganda is clear when the soldier describes the main enemy he was up against while fighting in Ukraine consisted of “mostly Americans and Poles.”

The second excerpt (from a Russian source) describes how a Serbian unit helped to defeat an attack by Ukrainian government forces against separatists in the city of Donetsk. The article points out how the former Russian commander of separatist forces in Donetsk (Igor Strelkov) gained combat experience while



A group of Serbian volunteers, helping Donetsk militia fight government troops in eastern Ukraine. Source: http://www.russia-insider.com/en/ukraine/serbian_volunteers_destroy_ukrainian_artillery

Source: R. Dragovic, “Account of Pro-Russian Combatant – Sniper,” Vecernje Novosti Online, 20 August 2014.

...Dejan Beric (40) from Putinci near Ruma, a soldier fighting for the forces of the so-called Donetsk People’s Republic, who are waging war in eastern Ukraine against the official army, described his release from Ukrainian captivity. He fell into the hands of the Kyiv soldiers late last month. He was captured on the road between Lugansk and the Russian border, during the transport of wounded soldiers to the Russian town of Rostov.

As he himself assessed, Beric is one of several dozen citizens of Serbia taking part in the civil war in Ukraine...

...Beric’s path from Srem to the war front took him through a construction site in the Russian town of Sochi. He was among several thousand Serbs who were working last year on construction projects in preparation for the Olympic Games. He is a specialist for installing aluminum windows and PVC carpentry, and he worked for a firm from Novi Pazar.

“I worked very hard, but the boss and his foreman tricked me. They refused to pay me or even issue me a work permit. When I protested they offered me a measly \$1,400 provided I leave the construction site right away. I refused so that I could sue this firm when I returned to Serbia. I was left in the street, without any money and without even any bread. At that time the Crimea crisis reached its peak. There was even talk of a NATO invasion. Since I had nothing to lose, I sat on a bus and signed up as a volunteer.

(continued)

Continued: Serb Volunteers Aid Russians in Ukraine

assisting pro-Serb forces in the Bosnian conflict of 1992-95. The excerpt also highlights the deep historical ties between Serbs and Russians.

The Serbian unit aiding the separatist forces in Eastern Ukraine is named after an 18th century Serbian leader who once “swore allegiance to the Russian Empire.”

*Official Kremlin sources continue to deny that Russia is providing direct military support to the separatists in Eastern Ukraine, claiming instead that the separatist movement is organic to the region and supported by volunteers from Russia and other countries. As these excerpts make clear, to bolster this specious argument the Kremlin has welcomed and, presumably, supports foreign fighters from Serbia who are assisting pro-Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

He said that he owed NATO payback for what had happened in Serbia in the war in 1999 when he was a soldier in the Yugoslav Army. He claims that he has always been a good shot and that he had been through sniper training.

“In our detachment I was doing scout-sabotage duties and my assignment was to seek out and destroy enemy snipers during an attack on us. In most of the fighting that I had been in, our enemy was not the Ukrainians. Their main forces, against which we fought, were made up of mostly Americans and Poles....

Source: Mikhail Voskresensky, “Serbian Volunteers Destroy Ukrainian Artillery in Donetsk Region,” RIA Novosti, 12 August 2014.

A group of Serbian volunteers, helping Donetsk militia to fight government troops in eastern Ukraine says they have repelled an offensive of pro-Kiev military forces who attempted overnight to break through to a vital motorway....

...Reports claiming that volunteers from the Jovan Sevic militia battalion were fighting in the breakaway Donetsk territory – the self-styled Donetsk People’s Republic, or DPR – started emerging as early as in May, when a group of Serbs first arrived in the then besieged city of Slaviansk near Donetsk.

Rumor has it that Igor Strelkov, who leads the DPR self-defense forces, knew the Serbian regiment back from the days when they all fought in the Bosnian War, an international armed conflict that took place between 1992 and 1995 and resulted in the internal partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The number of volunteers fighting in the Jovan Sevic militia battalion is unknown, but the media claim they have been able to identify the commander as Bratislav Zivkovic.

The battalion has been named to honor Jovan Sevic, the leader of a Serbian hussar cavalry regiment, who in 1751 swore allegiance to the Russian Empire and established the autonomy of Slavo-Serbia, a province that constituted the territories of present-day Luhansk and Donetsk regions in Ukraine....

President Putin and Russia's Defense Industry

5 September 2014

“...in the Kremlin and in the Government they calculate that under the chairmanship of Vladimir Putin the VPK can solve all of the critical issues between the military and industry much more accurately and efficiently, since it is precisely Putin who will have the last word....”

OE Watch Commentary: Since returning as the Russian leader in May 2012, President Putin has made improving the country's military prowess a top priority. Massive funds have been allocated toward rebuilding and modernizing Russia's Armed Forces. This increased defense spending aligns with and supports the Kremlin's primary geopolitical narrative: dangerous enemies (particularly from the West) are intent upon surrounding Russia in order to weaken its influence and steal its resources. Only a unified and militarily strong Russia will be able to stand up to and defeat this threat.

Perhaps to exhibit his personal concern for rebuilding Russia's military, Putin decided in September 2014 to personally oversee the country's military industrial complex (VPK). As the brief excerpt points out, in the past there have been problems with Russia's defense industry fully responding to the needs of the military. By transferring this oversight function from the Russian government (headed by Prime Minister Medvedev) and placing the management of military industry under his personal control, Putin has demonstrated the importance he places on ensuring that Russia's military is equipped with modern weapons.

There were likely other considerations behind this change of authority. Much of the Russian military industrial infrastructure is out-of-date and in need of modernization. Russia's involvement in the Ukrainian conflict has not only restricted military trade with Ukraine, but, as a result of Western sanctions, has also limited military imports from the West. Russian military industries will be challenged to find adequate import substitutions or to develop domestic replacements.

There is also the problem of corruption. Like other sectors of the Russian economy, defense expenditures are often misappropriated. Presumably, placing Russia's military industry within the purview of the president will add impetus to the domestic modernization effort and help to reduce corrupt practices.



President Putin meets with VPK Minister, Dmitry Rogozin, October 2013. Source: <http://www.vimi.ru/taxonomy/term/150>

Source: Ivan Safronov and Yevgeniy Kozichev, “Верховный главнорешающий Владимир Путин возглавит и ВПК тоже” [The Supreme Decider-in-Chief: Vladimir Putin will also Head the Military Industrial Commission], Kommersant Online, 5 September 2014.

As Kommersant has recently learned, in the near future the Military Industrial Commission (VPK) will lose its former prefix of being “under” the RF [Russian Federation] Government and it will be affixed directly to the President. It will be headed directly by Vladimir Putin, and its current head, Vice-Premier Dmitriy Rogozin, will become his deputy. Within the Government it is believed that with Presidential status the VPK will finally acquire the authorities which it lacked for the solution of perpetual disputes between industry and the military over billions of rubles....

...After the appointment of Dmitriy Rogozin as Vice Premier in charge of the defense complex, the structure of the VPK grew. Special councils were formed to create the technical foundations for the services and combat arms of the Armed Forces. As of today the commission is the main state organization making fundamental decisions for the most important defense projects and programs, for the development and series production of complex types of weapons and military equipment, for modernization and restructuring of the largest enterprises and entire branches of the defense industry and the cooperation among them, and for compiling the State Program for Weaponry and the State Defense Order....

...In its current form the VPK must also resolve issues associated with the financing and pricing of military programs, where the interests of the military and the military industry collide most sharply. And here the commission and the Government have had obvious problems. At that time Vladimir Putin had to personally intervene in the conflict and in a “hands-on” manner strike a compromise in his own office between

(continued)

Continued: President Putin and Russia's Defense Industry

Politics may have also played a role. Dmitry Rogozin, the current head of Russia's VPK, previously expressed considerable political ambition, and being responsible for channeling huge state revenues would have likely strengthened his influence among regional leaders. Subordinating his position and the VPK's mission directly under the Kremlin may be an attempt to monitor or restrict Rogozin's political influence.

*The article ends on rather a cynical note, noting that Putin already personally oversees nearly a dozen high-level functions and presidential councils. While the concept of a "power-vertical" (where the boss makes timely and effective decisions with little or no debate) looks good on paper, the reality is often considerably different. By pointing out all of the other areas which require the president's personal oversight, the authors might be suggesting that this organizational change may not improve the overall performance of Russia's military industry. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

the involved parties. Neither the VPK nor the Government at that time simply had sufficient authority to do this....

...In this regard, according to Kommersant's information, in the Kremlin and in the Government they calculate that under the chairmanship of Vladimir Putin the VPK can solve all of the critical issues between the military and industry much more accurately and efficiently, since it is precisely Putin who will have the last word....

...According to the Constitution, the President is the Supreme Commander in Chief and Chairman of the country's Security Council. Based on his position Vladimir Putin also heads the City Council, a consultative organization "aiding in the implementation of the authorities of the Head of State." Nine of 18 "councils under the President" operate under the immediate leadership of Vladimir Putin. They are [a council] for the modernization of the economy and innovative development, for inter-nationalities relations, for combatting corruption, for development of local self-government, for science and education, for culture and the arts, for the development of physical fitness and sports, an economic council, [a council] for the implementation of priority national projects, and [a council] for demographic policies. He personally heads three of 13 "commissions under the President."...



Biographical Sketch: Dmitry Rogozin and Russian Nationalism

By Ray Finch, FMSO

Since the collapse of the USSR, Russia has struggled with developing a new national idea. The political and economic trauma of the 1990s discredited the idea of liberal democracy, and for the past decade Russian nationalism has become more prominent. While there are a number of Russian leaders who have been lifted up on this wave of nationalism (to include the current president, Vladimir Putin), few have been as successful in riding this surge as Russia's new Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the country's military-industrial complex, Dmitry Rogozin. This paper briefly reviews Rogozin's biography, and in particular, the implications of his increasing political power for Russia and the United States.

<http://fms.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Rogozin.pdf>

Russian Hybrid Bikers

30 June 2014

“From ordinary motorcyclists, the Night Wolves have imperceptibly turned into a ramified, semi-military organization.”

OE Watch Commentary: Since the Kremlin's seizure and annexation of Crimea in March 2014, much has been written about the hybrid nature of Russian security forces who were involved in this operation. Regular Russian military units were augmented and assisted by a number of volunteer units (Cossacks, local militia, private security and paramilitary groups). Since these forces were not under its direct military command and control, the Kremlin was able to maintain plausible deniability that it was directing operations, and instead claimed that Crimean locals were behind the decision to rejoin Russia.

One of the more interesting groups which participated in this operation was the Night Wolves motorcycle group. As the brief excerpt points out, this group originated just as the USSR was collapsing, and since that time has transformed into a Kremlin-sponsored version of the Hells Angels. While these bikers share many of the same trappings of Western motorcycle groups (tattoos, leather and metal-studded clothing and loud engines), they certainly cannot be labeled as anti-government renegades. Just the opposite; the Night Wolves support and are endorsed by the Kremlin. Indeed, on numerous occasions President Putin has demonstrated his backing by riding with this group. As the excerpt also points out, this group also enjoys warm relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, and many of its members sport religious icons on their clothing or their bikes.

The political influence of this group, especially its leader, Aleksandr Zaldastanov, who is known by the moniker “the surgeon,” was on full display during an outdoor concert in the city of Sevastopol in August 2014. During this concert “the surgeon” narrated a frightening presentation which portrayed (with many lights and explosions) the Kremlin's rationale for annexing Ukraine and presumably aiding separatists in Eastern Ukraine. The primary theme centered upon the notion that fascists had seized the central government in Kiev, and so the Kremlin was compelled to send “polite” forces to protect the ethnic Russian population in Crimea and elsewhere. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v8isJEC8x8>)



Putin meeting with the leader of the Night Wolves, March 2013.
Source: <http://polit.ru/news/2013/03/13/hirurg/>

Source: Oleg Roldugin, “Как байкеры ‘Ночные волки’ стали политической стаей” [How the Night Wolves Bikers Became A Political Pack], Sobesednik Online, 30 June 2014. <http://sobesednik.ru/rassledovanie/20140630-kak-baykery-nochnye-volki-stali-politicheskoy-staey>

...The Night Wolves bike club recently marked a quarter of a century of existence. On the eve, without superfluous publicity, several “wolves” received “for Crimea” awards from Putin. Last week, the allocation of a large presidential grant to the bikers became known. From ordinary motorcyclists, the Night Wolves have imperceptibly turned into a ramified, semi-military organization.

The Night Wolves Autonomous Youth Noncommercial Organization -- this is what they call themselves. A “youth” organization, even though the backbone of the “wolves” is certainly not constituted by teenagers, but by men aged well over forty (their leader, Aleksandr Zaldastanov, nicknamed The Surgeon, is actually already 51)...

...But the most important thing is that the Night Wolves have regional subdepartments in almost all the major cities of the country. In some of them (Krasnogorsk, Moscow Oblast's Solnechnogorskiy Rayon), The Surgeon is once again the cofounder; in the rest, the cofounders are his proxies...

It was from the same period that the motorcyclists' rapprochement with the authorities began (last year Putin even awarded The Surgeon the Order of Honor). Nowadays, the formerly wild “wolves” eat out of the authorities' hand: They receive not only state grants for noncommercial organizations (although they have a fully flourishing business), but also state orders....Even the Defense Ministry hires these

(continued)

Continued: Russian Hybrid Bikers

*The excerpt also reveals some of the commercial activities of this group, pointing out that the Russian Ministry of Defense has actually employed the Night Wolves to provide security. While the article does not provide details of these security operations, it does remind readers that this group “helped check unrest on the [Crimean] peninsula and... erected the first barricade in Luhansk.” The author suggests that this group may be involved in hiring volunteers to fight for the pro-Russian cause in Eastern Ukraine. To protect Russian interests in Eastern Ukraine, the Kremlin leadership appears willing to employ all types of hybrid forces. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

same Wolves for security purposes (at least two contracts were concluded last year). It is indeed security, and not the nightclub, that has become the main business for the Night Wolves.

... After the annexation of the Crimea, Nikolov received a letter of commendation from Putin. After all, it was the Wolves who helped check unrest on the peninsula and who erected the first barricade in Luhansk.

Today, according to its documents, the holding company has several corporate bodies, and its branches operate in more than 100 cities in the country ... So that the Night Wolves are not simply about driving along the roads together with Putin.

It is not for nor nothing that Kyiv suspects that, among others, the Wolves, who are closely connected with the Russian special services, are behind the recruitment of volunteer militiamen men for Donetsk and Luhansk.... And if anything happens, the Wolves could stand up just as decisively for Putin as well. They already have the weapons and skills for this....

The Night Wolves, the first official Soviet bikers' club, was founded in Moscow on 31 May 1989. The president of the club is Aleksandr “The Surgeon” Zaldastanov. They have many regional branches in Russia and abroad (in Ukraine, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania). Their numerical strength is about 5,000 persons. The club is friendly with the Russian Orthodox Church and enjoys the special favor of Vladimir Putin.

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

By Ray Finch, FMSO

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

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



Expanding Russia's College-Military Education

1 September 2014

“A Ministry of Defense spokesman points out that the new training system will permit higher educational institution students to insure the continuity of their studies and obtain high quality military training and fulfill their constitutional duty for the defense of the Fatherland simultaneously with the receipt of a higher education.”

OE Watch Commentary: Officials within Russia's Ministry of Defense have recently implemented changes to allow a greater number of university students to complete required military training while enrolled. Upon graduation some of these students will then go on to serve within Russia's mobilization reserve. In the past only those students enrolled in a university which had a military department (военная кафедра) were allowed to partake in university military training, and, hence, satisfy their military obligation while still students. As the accompanying excerpt points out, fewer than 10% of Russian universities host a military department, thus forcing the majority of university students to serve as one-year conscripts upon graduation. Other university graduates were forced to gain a deferment (often by working toward a graduate degree) or take other measures to evade the draft. In a pilot program which began on 1 September, students enrolled in 60 Russian college-level institutions (which do not have a military department) will still be able to complete their military training via this new initiative and then go on to serve in the reserve.

While the article lacks specific details, the first phase of the program will allow students to gain theoretical training by periodically visiting nearby military facilities, followed by a more intense second phase which consists of a three-month training assembly over the summer. Students will receive training which aligns with their academic focus (e.g., engineers will study military engineering while medical students will learn about military medicine). Interestingly, the article suggests that humanities students will “become soldiers and officers [who] conduct information warfare.”

Another important nuance of the program is that the length of training and the student's performance will determine whether he serves as an officer, sergeant or soldier in the reserves. According to the excerpt, a student will have to study 2.5 years to attain a reserve officer rank,



University students with military diploma. Gorny Univ., St. Petersburg.
Source: <http://www.spmi.ru/ucheb/vk>

Source: Dmitriy Litovkin, “Под конкретные потребности армии” [For the Army's Specific Requirements], Vzglyad Online, 1 September 2014.
<http://www.vz.ru/society/2014/9/1/703334.html>

Three-month training assemblies and special examinations on the military-registration specialty – all of this will now await Russian students. The military profession training rules at Russian civilian vuzs [higher educational institutions] are changing beginning on 1 September. Students, who have not passed the corresponding examinations, will be obliged to perform compulsory service in the Army after graduation from a higher educational institution.

Sixty higher educational institutions have become involved with training based upon the new rules beginning in September. According to the data of the Ministry of Defense, more than 15,000 young men have expressed the desire to complete training based upon the military-registration specialties of soldiers-seamen, sergeants-petty officers, and also reserve officers. This is 2.8 percent of the total number of young people, who are graduating annually from Russian higher educational institutions....

President Vladimir Putin assigned that task to the Ministry of Defense in his message to the Federal Assembly. In his words, the country must not only have a “trained mobilization reserve” but also do this in such a way in order that “all students could undergo military training and obtain a military specialty during the course of their studies and subsequent military training assembly”. “This mechanism will permit

(continued)

Continued: Expanding Russia's College-Military Education

2 years for a sergeant rank and 1.5 years for a soldier. Those students who fail to complete the training, fail the qualifying exam or drop out of the university will be required to serve as active duty conscripts.

Over the past decade Russian political and defense officials have worked hard to raise the prestige of serving in the Russian military. Even though legislation was passed in 2013 whereby civil service employment for young Russian males (to include state-owned companies) was contingent upon completion of military service, many still regard military service as an unnecessary disruption. By offering a program whereby a greater number of university students can satisfy their military obligation while completing their education, Russian defense officials hope to strengthen the country's defense potential, while allowing university students to complete their education.
End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

us to train the needed number of reservists on the military specialties that are most in demand, first of all technical, while in the process not drafting them into the Armed Forces,” Vladimir Putin stated.

The essence of the innovations is that, if a higher educational institution doesn't have a reserve officer training department, a student will be able to obtain a military registration specialty at a joint inter-branch military training center. Where that capability will not exist, other forms of training will be developed, including with the use of Ministry of Defense higher educational institutions and military units. . . .

. . .the number of higher educational institutions, where reserve officer training departments or military training centers are operating at the present time, are extremely insignificant – a total of 72 higher educational institutions in the country, or approximately seven percent of the total number of educational institutions. This is precisely why students do not always have the opportunity to complete military training during the course of their studies.

In practice, the process will be divided into two phases. Theory at the training center is conducted in the first phase and three-month training assemblies in the second phase. They plan to conduct the classes at firing ranges and ranges with the use of military vehicles. The new military training system will be carried out based upon the military registration specialties, which are related to the civilian specialties, on which the students are completing their studies.

Everything is clear with the students of the technical and medical departments: engineers will design at their classes, computer specialists will write programs, electrical engineers – will become familiar with state-of-the-art electronic warfare systems, and doctors – will master the subtleties of military medicine. Employment will also be found for humanities majors: philosophers, psychologists, and so forth, and journalists will be sent to counterpropaganda subunits in the event of a universal mobilization. In other words, they will become soldiers and officers of subunits, which conduct information warfare. . . .

The training system is also changing at the training centers. So, the time periods of training will also be differentiated depending on the student's desire to become a reserve soldier, sergeant, or officer. He will have to study for up to two and a half years based upon the reserve officer training program. They will train a sergeant for two years and a soldier for a total of 1.5 years. . . .

In the event of disenrollment from the higher educational institution or unsatisfactory results while taking the qualification tests or qualification examination on the military registration specialty, conscription for the performance of compulsory service in the Army awaits the student. If the student will receive an unsatisfactory grade while taking the examination on the military registration specialty, he will not be awarded the military rank of reserve soldier-seaman, sergeant-petty officer, or lieutenant. And he will also have to serve based upon conscription according to standard procedures.

The new student training system at the inter-vuz military training centers will permit the students to perform military service without a break in their educations. This is especially relevant as a result of the changed Russian law with regard to a ban on hiring for state and municipal positions of individuals, who have not completed compulsory or other service in the Russian Army. The State Duma adopted this amendment to the law during the course of the winter session and it entered into force during the spring of this year.

A Ministry of Defense spokesman points out that the new training system will permit higher educational institution students to insure the continuity of their studies and obtain high quality military training and fulfill their constitutional duty for the defense of the Fatherland simultaneously with the receipt of a higher education. On the other hand, the Army obtains a high-quality reserve that consists of professionally trained specialists. According to the data of the Ministry of Defense, more than one million higher educational institution students are on the military register in Russia.

Russia Reinvents the Arctic Air Spectacular

14 August 2014

“Following the VDV [Airborne Troops] unit which landed on an ice floe near the North Pole in April, Air Force pilots started flying over the Earth’s ‘bellybutton.’ A flight of the Western Military District’s latest Su-34 aircraft reached the extreme northern point of the planet.”

OE Watch Commentary: It is a long flight from Voronozh (well south of Moscow and near Ukraine) to the North Pole, but four Su-34 FULLBACK two-seater multirole deep-strike fighters made the 50,000 kilometer trip in three days. The planes refueled in Murmansk and then made two aerial refuelings simultaneously in pairs afterwards. Each pilot spent about 20 hours flying his craft.

The flight accomplished two goals. First, it demonstrated that Russian interception, close air support, anti-shiping and radar-jamming capabilities extend to the North Pole. Second, it appealed to the Russian historic memory of the heroic Soviet Polar flights of 1932-1938 (the Golden Age of Soviet Polar Exploration), which had caught the popular imagination and diverted attention from the political purges. Every Russian schoolchild knows about these great moments of their history. This flight came 74 years after the 21 May 1937 first landing at the North Pole by a Soviet Tupolev TB-3 bomber. Russian is pushing to re-establish itself as a great power, and this flight contributed to that effort.

End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, <http://rg.ru/>, 14 August 2014.

Two Refuelings Over the Arctic

“The Su-34 route passed over the Arctic Ocean, where navigation is extremely difficult. However, the pilots reached the Pole with pinpoint accuracy. On the long flight they managed twice to fill up their tanks from an Il-78 tanker. The Su-34’s refueled in pairs. The crews synchronized their approach to the tanker and had fuel injected into their tanks simultaneously. This is the most difficult element of combat training of military pilots. And when it is performed by two aircraft one can only say: first class!

Other pilots, too, have to learn the new Arctic routes. Air Force Commander-in-Chief Viktor Bondarev announced that the aviation command is planning a flight over the North Pole by a MiG-31 interceptor aircraft. The general stated that recently this plane reached the 82nd parallel after refuelings. “In subsequent training we will attempt the appearance of a MiG-31 fighter over the North Pole for the first time in its entire history”.

As for the ground infrastructure created by the military in the Arctic zone, the Temp airfield on Kotelnnyy Island will be adapted for arrivals and departures of Il-76 heavy transport aircraft. The Air Force Main Headquarters believes that Temp is able to take diverse military aircraft all year round, rather than for nine months of the year as happens now. In addition, development of the Rogachevo airfield on the Novaya Zemlya and other northern points is under way. This refers, in particular, to Vorkuta, Tiksi, and Anadyr. And also to Cape Schmidt. ...there and on Wrangel Island, the Eastern Military District Arctic group will deploy in the near future. According to Colonel Gordeyev of the Eastern Military District press service, two 32-module administrative-residential complexes will be delivered to Wrangel Island and Cape Schmidt over the course of a month. Each complex consists of residential, general service, and administrative units. The military will have a room for sports activities, a sauna, and a relaxation room. The complex is assembled in the form of a star, facilitating movement inside the building. At the same time, exposure of people to the frosty air is reduced as much as possible.”



Russian Sukhoi Su-34 twin-seat fighter-bombers.
Source: http://en.ria.ru/military_news/

OE Watch Commentary: September is the best month for sailing on the North East Passage and the Russian Navy is moving ships and equipment in September to establish a permanent naval base on the New Siberian Islands, presumably near the reopened Temp Air Base. The Russian military is making a major effort to establish a credible presence in the Arctic, and this new naval base is part of that design. September is also the month of impending polar night; thus, much of the construction of the new naval base must be done quickly to beat the dark. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“The Russian armed forces are setting up a permanent base for the Northern Fleet on the New Siberian Islands in the Arctic Ocean. ‘The main goal of another movement of a unit of Northern Fleet ships to the Arctic is to deliver a Northern Fleet tactical unit’s personnel, equipment and materiel, which from now on will be deployed for service on the New Siberian Islands on a permanent basis’ according to the Russian Defense Ministry quoting Northern Fleet Commander Adm. Vladimir Korolyov.”

Source: Interfax, 6 September 2014, <http://www.interfax.com/>; Aleksandr Filimonenko, Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 4 September 2014, <http://rg.ru/>

Russia sets up permanent military base in Arctic

A unit of ships including the anti-submarine vessel Admiral Levchenko, the battleships Georgy Pobedonosets and Kondopoga, the tanker Sergei Osipov, the rescue tow vessel Pamir, and the Alexander Pushkin anchor-handling tug supply vessel belonging to the Baltic Fleet has departed from Severomorsk for the New Siberian Islands.

“To ensure the safest possible navigation conditions in Arctic regions, which are complicated in terms of navigational situations, the movement of the unit of ships will be organized taking into account the specifics of hydro-meteorological conditions and permanent monitoring of the ice situation, in which Northern Fleet planes and helicopters will be involved,” Korolyov said.

The vessels will be escorted by Rosatom icebreakers over some stretches of the Northern Sea Route.

This is the third major movement of Russian Northern Fleet vessels to the Arctic over the past several years. Northern Fleet marines landed on an unimproved shore of the Kotelny Island for the first time in the Russian Navy’s history in 2012. A unit of vessels led by the Pyotr Veliky nuclear missile cruiser, the Northern Fleet flagship, delivered equipment and materiel to the New Siberian Islands for the restoration of the Temp aviation command outpost there in 2013.

A Canopy Protects the ‘Polar Star’

The military have begun upgrading Arctic bases on Vrangal Island in the Arctic Ocean along the coastline of Chukotka and on Cape Otto Shmidt on the mainland. Modern and self-sustaining, they will be like facilities from a science fiction movie.

They intend to erect the Polyarnaya Zvezda [Polar Star] nuclear-powered modular military garrisons during the four weeks of September. The base will have interconnected housing, management and administrative units, rooms for engaging in sports, saunas, and a rest and relaxation room. The modular settlements will be protected from the severe Arctic conditions by a special transparent canopy.

“The Commander of Troops of the Eastern Military District [VVO] Sergey Surovikin has ordered that the military garrisons on Vrangal Island and on Cape Shmidt be ready by 1 October. “And special attentions must be given to the ecology of the region,” stated Colonel Aleksandr Gordeyev, Chief of the Press Service of the Eastern Military District.

Further, tons of scrap metal, primarily metal barrels, were left on the island from Soviet times. VVO servicemen are currently engaged in their collection and preparation for scrapping on the mainland.

“During the last half of the 1940s, aviation was the principle means of delivering nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union was in a worse position than the United States. American aviation could use airbases in various countries to strike our land. We did not have airbases close to the USA and the distance of the flight made our bombers incapable of striking their territory”

OE Watch Commentary: Russian officers have long been trained to regard the past as prelude and to realize that valuable lessons can be drawn from the successes and failures of the past. The study of military history is important for the military not merely as history buffs or patriots, but also for its lessons to improve their profession. The Military-Historical Journal has been published since 1939 as the professional history journal of the Ministry of Defense. It is one of the leading peer-reviewed journals of academic Russia and features significantly in the graduate degree research of Russian military historians. What articles appear when is also of interest. Aviation over the Arctic is now a matter of national concern. The article excerpted here appeared one month before the four SU-34 deep-strike fighters overflew the North Pole (see previous entry). While it talks about the history of ice floe airfields, this article may reflect current interest in their use as auxiliary airfields while Russia continues to reopen and build more air bases in the arctic. Although the SU-34 and the MiG-31 normally fly off hardened airstrips and aerial refueling played a key role in the SU-34 achievement, ice floe airfields might be able to handle these and maybe larger aircraft in a pinch. During the late 1940s-early 1950s an entire regiment of LA-11 long-range piston-engine fighters was stationed on an ice floe airfield guarding the northern approaches.

The article itself is a concise history of the US/Soviet development of ice floe airfields and Arctic bases during 1946-1958. It is remarkable for its bombast, characterizing the Soviet developments as a defensive reaction to US aggression and not as Soviet offensive posturing. The implication is that the US threatened the Soviet Union with a northern strike before and may still do so. The Cold War is not yet over, but is being perpetuated in the pages of the Military-historical Journal. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

Source: A. V. Samokhin, Voenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal [Military-historical journal], July 2014

Ice Floe Aerodromes: Myths and Reality

“Several times in contemporary publications, J. V. Stalin is credited with giving the personal orders to establish airbases on the polar ice floes of the Arctic Ocean from which bomber pilots could soar while aiming at America....Analysis shows that the Soviet military leadership got a shove to master the Arctic, not as a result of the aggressive ideas of Stalin, but in response to the burgeoning threat to our country from the military actions of the USA.”

Ice floe airfields had their problems. A 2007 monograph states “establishing a network of emergency airfields on the ice floes of the Arctic Ocean, as the experience with the organization and work on drift station SP-1 demonstrated, is impossible.” IL-28 and TU-16 bombers had trouble landing on the ice “when braking, these heavy machines went out of control. Further, the high salt content in the ice caused them to rust, making takeoffs and landings so bumpy that it was impossible to read the instruments.”

Soviet bombers eventually left the ice floe airfields. “On 23 May 1958, TU-16 and TU-95 bombers were sitting on the ice floe airfield near drift station SP-6. During takeoff, a TU-16 bomber’s wing hooked into a nearby IL-14. Both aircraft were seriously damaged. Maintaining bombers in the Arctic was impossible. After this, the TU-16 bombers never again landed on an ice floe airfield.”

Russian Tupolev Tu-16 bomber. Source: www.soviethammer.net



Annexing Crimean Dolphins

12 September 2014

OE Watch Commentary: Russia's annexation of Crimea brought under Russian control not only Ukrainian military bases, but also the State Aquarium of Sevastopol in Crimea, the training site of the specially trained military dolphins. On 12 September the aquarium was reportedly fully transferred from Ukrainian to Russian jurisdiction.

After the Crimean annexation in March, Russian authorities claimed that, just as the Ukrainian forces defected to Russia, the dolphins also "defected" from Ukraine. Although plans were in place to retire the operation, the military decided in April to keep it active. Despite demands by Ukraine in July to return the program to its jurisdiction, Russia continued to lay claim to the aquarium. On 12 September, according to the accompanying RIA Novosti article, acting Mayor of Sevastopol Sergei Menyailo announced the full transfer of the program from Ukraine to Russia's Ministry of Defense. He also reported that four dolphins working in a child therapy program to help children with cerebral palsy, mental disorders, and psychological stress would be transferred to the dolphin center to continue their work.

Utilizing sea mammals in the military is not an entirely new concept. The Soviet Union originally began the program during the Cold War. After the collapse of the USSR the program was placed under Ukrainian jurisdiction and was halted until 2012, when it was re-launched. The dolphins are trained to patrol, rescue lost naval swimmers, or locate underwater mines. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kangas)**

"The use of bottlenose dolphins as naval assets was begun during the Cold War in Sevastopol by the Soviet Union in 1973." Photo: Mikhail Semenov.
Source: http://www.dolphin-way.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Russian_military_dolphins.jpg



Source: "Крымские боевые дельфины "приняты на службу" в Российскую армию (Crimean military dolphins "adopted into the Russian army Service)," RIA Novosti, September 12, 2014, http://ria.ru/defense_safety/20140912/1023813783.html.

The Crimean State Oceanarium, where the training of military dolphins occurs, was fully transferred to Russia's Ministry of Defense, reported state governor of Sevastopol, Sergei Menyailo, in an interview with RIA Novosti.

Previously, the bottlenose dolphins and fur seals were training in the Soviet program for the Ukrainian Navy's interests. The Ukrainian military took responsibility of the program after the fall of the USSR, but only just restarted the program in 2012. After the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the oceanarium and dolphins, respectively, would also be part of the Russian state.

"This organization was fully transferred under the jurisdiction of Russia's Ministry of Defense, and now the city has no say in the matter," said Menyailo.

OE Watch Commentary: *The long-standing and tense standoff along the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh has of late witnessed a significant spike in activity. Clashes that concluded in the beginning of August 2014 resulted in at least 14 killed; the incidents quickly attracted wide international attention, and President Putin met with his counterparts from Armenia and Azerbaijan shortly thereafter.*

In the accompanying article Armenian and Belarusian political leaders allude to the role of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) regarding this situation. As the second excerpt indicates, in fall 2013 press outlets relayed the words of the commander of Russia's 102d Military Base in Gyumri, Armenia, who referred to a possible use of his forces within the framework of CSTO if Baku were to seek a resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh through the use of force.

Russia and Armenia desire a peaceful settlement and continuation of a favorable situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan's continued increase of its military capabilities and defense industry, in concert with further incidents along the line of contact, will likely continue to spur Moscow to employ varied means in keeping this status quo and prevent an unwelcome distraction from more pressing events in Ukraine.
End OE Watch Commentary (Sarafian)

Map Source: www.css.ethz.ch/publications/DetailansichtPubDB_EN/covers/css_analysen_131_Karabakh.jpg

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh



Source: “Ереван и Минск выступают за мирное урегулирование карабахского конфликта – Шармазанов (Yerevan and Minsk call for a peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict – Sharamanzov),” *Новости-Армения (Armenia News)*, 13 September 2013. <http://www.newsarmenia.ru/politics/20140913/43101300.html>

Armenia and Belarus call for a peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict, declared on Saturday [13 SEP] Edouard Sharmazanov ... co-chairman of the Armenian-Belarusian interparliamentary committee on cooperation...

...“It is well known, that we are allies within CSTO [Collective Security Treaty Organization]. We attach a significant meaning to the peaceful resolution of all conflicts,” said Sharamanzov.

In turn, Victor Guminsky, the co-chairman of the Belarusian side of the interparliamentary committee ... declared that joint work for the benefit of both nations will continue in the future.

“The events, which are now occurring in Ukraine and in other regions, do not have any other alternatives than a peaceful negotiation process. And Ukraine is evidence of this...” said Guminsky.

Since the 12th of May, 1994 after the entry into force of the tripartite agreement on a truce in the zone of conflict, fighting has ceased, which had claimed – from both sides – approximately 25-30 thousand personnel and which had forced about one million people to abandon their homes.

An agreement about the establishment of a ceasefire has been observed until now. From 1992 until the present day negotiations go on regarding a peaceful settlement of the conflict within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, whose co-chairmanship consists of the USA, Russia, and France.

Source: Belousov, Y. “Южный форпост России (Southern Outpost of Russia),” *Красная Звезда (Red Star)*, 10 October 2013. <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/news-menu/v-armiyakh-sng/armenia/item/12045-yuzhnyj-forpost-rossii>

In the event of the leadership of Azerbaijan taking the decision to restore jurisdiction over Nagorno-Karabakh by the use of force the base may enter into combat ... within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Russian Thinking on the Use of Partisan Commando and Regular Commando Units

“The conduct of commando operations by methods of partisan actions (in the aforementioned sense) will become one of the main components of offensive operations in future wars of low and medium intensity.”

OE Watch Commentary: Colonel-General Anatoliy Zaytsev offered an interesting critique of Russian military thinking, with a direct bearing on events in Eastern Ukraine, in the pages of *Voyenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer Online*. He addressed the offense and defense in modern conflicts from the perspective of commando operations, which fits with the ongoing operations conducted by Russian-backed Ukrainian surrogates. He makes little distinction between partisan commandoes and commandoes, which implies they tend to be interchangeable. Zaytsev notes that war will always have a contact element, and that the surprise use of traditional forces is getting more difficult by the day due to the eternal vigilance of the battlefield that drones and satellite images provide.

In Crimea, for example, it became clear to Zaytsev that the use of commando units to seal off possible centers of resistance of a potential enemy was crucial to the operation's overall success. Commando units are highly maneuverable and are able to offset an opponent's use of superior firepower by using light means of transportation (motorcycles, etc.). He noted that partisan commando methods are already playing an important, if not paramount role in strategic studies of the probable enemy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Source: Colonel-General Anatoliy Zaytsev, “By Partisan Methods: Modern Armed Forces Must Be Able To Fight Without a Front Line,” *VPK Voyenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer Online*, 3 Sep 14 - 9 Sep 14

In particular, the concealed concentration and operational deployment of troops, not to mention the advance of any kind of major reserve, have become practically unrealizable. Under those conditions it is unrealistic to establish a major troop grouping such as at the level of a reinforced division on axes for delivery of the main and diversionary attacks.

Taking a broader look at the actions of blocking subunits, their similarity to tactics of medium-size and small commando teams (we will call them partisan teams) will become obvious. Their ultimate mission clearly is to destroy critically important enemy facilities and disorganize or destroy his troop support systems.

A characteristic feature of such tactics is high maneuverability based on use of light transport vehicles: motorcycles, bicycles, light cars, all-wheel-drive off-road vehicles, and even four-wheelers. . . .such teams make a fast-moving fire assault against planned targets at a distance favorable to themselves and withdraw along a preplanned route using light means of transportation.

It goes without saying how much the number of critically important facilities on Russian territory has increased by the present time: atomic and hydroelectric power plants, enterprises of the defense industry, above all of missile-nuclear and space sectors, airfields, major POL depots, and state reserve warehouses. Protection of those and other critically important facilities falls within territorial defense (TO) missions assigned to the MVD VV [Internal Troops] both in peacetime as well as in the period of execution.

There is an obvious need for a radical revision of plans for protecting strategic facilities and assigned territorial zones, where the use of commando subunits on main axes of enemy offensive operations can be predicted with high probability. In the present-day military-political situation there needs to be an integral and balanced state system of TO. It is impossible to repel any aggression without creating, adjusting, and bringing [such a system] to permanent combat readiness.

ISIS's Information Operations: Analyzing their Themes and Messages

The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) is a Sunni jihadist group active in Iraq and Syria. In June 2014 it declared itself the Islamic Caliphate and changed its name to the “Islamic State,” claiming religious authority over all Muslims across the world and aspiring to bring the Muslim world under its political control. The group conducts a comprehensive information operations campaign on its Turkish language news site *takvahaber.net*, where it uses certain themes and messages to flaunt its power, promote its ideology, and target those who criticize it. Close monitoring and examination of the group’s daily statements, videos and updates shed light on the group’s strategy, its target audience and strategic communications, while also providing insight into its goals and motivations.

ISIS's Information Operations

It is unclear when the group adopted *takvahaber.net* as its news site, but it appears that the site has been operational since June 2010.¹ The website defends ISIS through its articles, and hosts an array of videos, including the beheadings for which the group has been responsible. Some of the videos also make their way onto YouTube, and each article features a link which one can click to “like” the piece and “share” it on Facebook and Twitter, suggesting a wide social media presence. The site’s colorful, technically advanced home page looks like a news site at first, but one can quickly glean that it is an ISIS-affiliated site due to the posts there.

For example, on 15 September 2014 the home page featured the following main news items: “Interview with the Islamic State”; “The Islamic State’s Third Execution Video,”; and an article entitled, “It Is Kufr [infidel] to Join the Coalition against the Islamic State.” In the “Interview with the Islamic State” the site features an extensive interview Abu Ahmet el Bahreyni, described as one of the high-level leaders of the group, in which he discusses topics such as the stages of jihad and the Islamic State’s difference from other jihadi groups, and implies that ISIS is more evolved than al Qaida and is focused on the real mission of jihad, whereas other jihadi groups focused on fighting against the U.S.²

Themes and Messages

The group’s comprehensive information operations strategy includes carefully thought out themes and messages to reach and influence its target audience. There are several overarching themes which can be gleaned from the site.

- **“The Islamic State has money, weapons and respect”:** Many of the articles send the message that the group is very powerful, is attracting the respect and allegiance of other groups and has plenty of weapons and money. For example, on 15 September the group declared that it had downed three planes, claiming, “The Islamic State’s air defense units have downed a war plane belonging to the Assad regime in Raqqa. This brings the number of downed planes up to three in the last few days!”³ On 16 September 2014 an article claimed that the Algerian al-Qaida had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (see Figure 2).⁴

An important piece with the message that ISIS has money and resources appeared on 12 August 2014, entitled, “The Islamic State has become oil rich from 80 thousand barrels of oil,” in which the group claimed:



Figure 1. The Takvahaber.net homepage. Source: Takvahaber.net



Figure 2. “Algerian al-Qaida pledges allegiance to the Islamic State”
Source: <http://www.takvahaber.net/dunya/cezayir-el-kaidesinden-halifeyebiat-h9779.html>

(continued)

Continued: ISIS's Information Operations: Analyzing their Themes and Messages

The Islamic State controls 7 oil fields in Iraq that have the potential to produce 8 million dollars worth of oil daily....In addition to Iraq, the Islamic State also controls important oil fields in the Deir ez-Zor region of Syria. The Islamic State is following a strategy of gaining strength by taking over the oil and water resources along with the energy infrastructure in Iraq and Syria.⁵ (Figure 3).

In a similar message, under the photo gallery, one can click on a link to view “The Islamic State’s billion dollar weapons,” which features pictures of missiles, helicopters, armored vehicles, tanks and rockets.⁶ (Figure 4).

On 17 September an article entitled, “Saudi: The Islamic State Cannot Be Wiped Out in 10 Years!” appeared, stating: “U.S.-supported Saudi Arabia’s Foreign Minister Saud bin Faisal expressed that the fight against the Islamic State must last at least ten years. Faisal’s comments once again illustrated the helplessness of coalition countries against the Islamic State.”⁷

- **“ISIS provides services to the public”:**

Many of the photos, articles and videos depict ISIS as providing services for the public. One photo gallery is entitled, “The Islamic State’s Water Canal Project,” in which images are accompanied by the caption, “The Islamic State’s public works directorate continues to solve the public’s water problem.”⁸ Another one is entitled, “ISIS is distributing food and gas to the people of Anbar,” accompanied by images of ISIS militants distributing packages to children.⁹ The theme of providing services especially to children is a recurring one, as seen in the photo gallery entitled, “Islamic State [organizes] Activities for Children,” in which images of children are accompanied by this caption: “The Islamic State’s volunteers planned social activities for orphans.”¹⁰

Figure 3. “The Islamic State has become oil rich from 80 thousand barrels of oil.”
Source: <http://www.takvhaber.net/ekonomi/islam-devleti-80-bin-varille-petrol-zengini-oldu-h9367.html>



(continued)



Continued: ISIS's Information Operations: Analyzing their Themes and Messages

- **“Invader versus Caliphate”; “Us versus them”:**

The group frequently and consistently refers to the U.S. as the “Invader,” the proposed coalition as “the evil coalition,” and itself as the “Caliphate.” For example, on 12 September 2014 the featured article was entitled, “Lebanese Sunni Intellectual Sheik Ahmed el-Esir Declared that It Is ‘kufr’ [infidel] to Help or Support the Global Alliance Being Established against the Islamic State.” On 16 September the site reported that, “Cracks are appearing in Obama’s coalition. The ‘evil coalition’ that Invader U.S.A leader Obama has established has started cracking from the start.”¹²

- **“Evil coalition and civilian killings”:**

Many of the posts, articles and images come with claims of civilian killings by the “evil coalition.” A 14 September 2014 posting demonstrates this message clearly. In a piece accompanying a video entitled, “The Islamic State’s Third Execution Video,” the group states: “Another stern move has been made against the U.S. and its loyal ally England, which has bombed many regions in Iraq under IS’s control and which continues to massacre tens of defenseless civilians. A journalist named David Cawthorne Haies, was executed due to the British government’s support for the U.S...”¹³

Similarly, a 16 September 2014 posting entitled, “U.S. Planes [throw] Poisonous Bomb on Baghdad!,” claims:

Following the establishment of the evil coalition against the Islamic State, it has been reported that the U.S. has conducted air strikes near Baghdad. According to initial reports, the poisonous bombs have caused many deaths in the population...Iraqi activists have announced that the U.S. attack was conducted in the southwest of Baghdad and the poisonous bombs have killed many innocent civilians.¹⁴

Website Organization

The website’s primary navigation menu includes sections entitled, “Photo Gallery,” “Video Gallery,” “Company Guide” (which is empty) and “Advertisements” (which is also empty). The photo and video galleries include pictures on the Islamic State’s alleged weapons which it took over, in addition to images depicting the group’s attacks. Videos include beheadings, images of a plane that the group alleges it shot down, and similar features depicting itself as powerful and in control.

The subnavigation menu includes the following categories: “Daily,” “World,” “Economy,” “Science and Technology,” “Arts & Culture,” “Family & Health,” “Research,” “Media Articles,” and “Islam,” featuring articles that have been taken from other news sources. Takvhaber also features op-ed articles by alleged columnists who write opinion pieces on Islam. In addition the site also features a poll, which asks, “Is Prof. Dr. Sheik Baghdadi’s Declaration of the Caliphate Legitimate or Not?”; as of 17 September allegedly 47% of respondents had voted yes.

Target Audience

The group appears to be conducting an intense public relations campaign through the Turkish language site, particularly aimed at reaching Turkish citizens (there is a potential recruitment pool for ISIS of 75 million Muslims in Turkey), but also possibly ethnic Turks from Central Asia. Another target audience may be the Turkish diaspora abroad, particularly the large Turkish population in Germany, among whom some former Turkish jihadis had emerged (most of the videos are posted in Arabic; however, they also feature both Turkish and German subtitles).

ISIS’s Turkish-language website ostensibly has three purposes: to serve as an information clearinghouse for Turkish-speaking militants and sympathizers; to create a sense of community among Turkish-speaking Muslims with an inclination for jihad; and to demonstrate a sense of control, power, wealth and military strength and of protecting innocent civilians, while casting the U.S. and its allies as evil, infidel and invaders.

Continued: Text:

Endnotes

- 1 “Who Is’ Query for takvahaber.net,” dated 16 September 2014, <http://www.whois.com/whois/takvahaber.net>
- 2 “İslam Devleti ile röportaj (Interview with the Islamic State),” 15 September 2014, <http://www.takvahaber.net/islam-devleti-ile-roportaj-3-bolum-roportaj,47.html>
- 3 “İslam Devleti 3 uçak düşürdü! (The Islamic State downed 3 planes!),” 16 September 2014, <http://www.takvahaber.net/dunya/islam-devleti-3-ucak-dusurdu-h9785.html>
- 4 “Cezayir El Kaide’sinden Halifeye biat (Algerian Al Qaida Pledges Allegiances to the Caliphate),” 16 September 2014, <http://www.takvahaber.net/dunya/cezayir-el-kaidesinden-halifeye-biat-h9779.html>
- 5 “İslam Devleti 80 bin varille petrol zengini oldu (The Islamic State becomes oil rich with 80 thousand barrels of oil),” 14 August 2014, <http://www.takvahaber.net/ekonomi/islam-devleti-80-bin-varille-petrol-zengini-oldu-h9367.html>
- 6 “İslam Devleti’nin milyar dolarlık silahları (The Islamic State’s billion dollar weapons),” Undated, <http://www.takvahaber.net/islam-devletinin-milyar-dolarlik-silahlari-resimleri,93.html>
- 7 “Suud: İslam Devleti 10 yılda bile bitmez! (Suud: The Islamic State cannot be wiped out in 10 years!” 17 September 2014, <http://www.takvahaber.net/dunya/suud-islam-devleti-10-yilda-bile-bitmez-h9796.html>
- 8 “İslam Devleti’nden su kanalı projesi (Water Canal project by the Islamic State),” Undated, <http://www.takvahaber.net/islam-devletinden-su-kanali-projesi-resimleri,92.html>
- 9 “İŞİD, Anbar’da halka yiyecek ve gaz dağıtıyor (ISIS is distributing food and gas to the people of Anbar),” Undated, <http://www.takvahaber.net/isid-anbarda-halka-yiyecek-ve-gaz-dagitiyor-resimleri,74.html>
- 10 “İslam Devleti’nden çocuklara etkinlik (The Islamic State [organizes] activities for children),” Undated, <http://www.takvahaber.net/islam-devletinden-cocuklara-etkinlik-resimleri,96.html>
- 11 “İslam Devleti’ne karşı kurulan koalisyona katılmak küfürdür (It is kufr to join the coalition against Islamic State),” 12 September 2014, <http://www.takvahaber.net/dunya/islam-devletine-karsi-kurulan-koalisyona-katilmak-kufurdur-h9739.html>
- 12 “Obama’nın koalisyonunda çatlaklar başladı (Cracks are appearing in Obama’s coalition),” 16 September 2014, <http://www.takvahaber.net/dunya/obamanin-koalisyonunda-catlaklar-basladi-h9787.html>
- 13 “İslam Devleti’nin 3. infaz videosu (The Islamic State’s third execution video),” 14 September 2014, <http://www.takvahaber.net/dunya/islam-devletinin-3-infaz-videosu-h9753.html>
- 14 “ABD uçaklarından Bağdat’a zehirli bomba! (U.S. Planes [throw] poisonous bomb on Baghdad!),” 16 September 2014, <http://www.takvahaber.net/dunya/abd-ucaklarindan-bagdata-zehirli-bomba-h9786.html>