

Foreign Military Studies Office

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FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Special Feature: The Kremlin's Economic Checkmate Maneuver

SPECIAL ESSAY

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“Though Putin’s visit will be remembered for the South Stream announcement, what is most remarkable about it is the continued development of Russian-Turkish relations, amid mounting tensions between Putin and the West.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 1 December the annual meeting of the High Level Russian-Turkish Cooperation Council took place in Turkey. Despite fundamental disagreements between Ankara and Moscow on important regional issues, including Syria, Egypt, and Ukraine, Russian President Putin and Turkish President Erdoğan made important strides to increase bilateral trade and forge a closer energy partnership. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press discuss the significance of the visit.

As these passages point out, the most significant outcome of the meeting was the announcement that Moscow dropped plans for the “South Stream” energy project and proposed an alternative undersea pipeline to Turkey. While some in the Turkish press expressed euphoria over the deal, others were more skeptical. For example, the first passage claims that this plan will turn Turkey into an energy hub and an important player in global energy markets, while increasing Turkey’s strategic importance vis-a-vis the European Union. On the other hand, the second passage warns of “overdependence” on Russia for Turkey’s energy needs, pointing out that, in addition to Turkey’s dependence on Russia for gas, Russia’s state-run atomic energy company will build Turkey’s first nuclear power plant, whose construction is to start in 2015.

The second passage also notes that the meeting looked like a joint cabinet meeting, given the fact that both sides brought at least ten ministers to the table. Written by expert journalist Semih Idiz, the passage points out that Turkey and Russia are getting closer due to the international isolation in which the two countries find themselves over a host of issues.

The third and fourth passages focus on the fact that, despite disagreements on other issues and despite mounting tensions between Putin and the West, Turkish-Russian relations continue based on realpolitik. The third passage reminds the reader, however, that Turkey is a member of NATO, and, as such, Turkey’s



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.
Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Putin_and_Erdoğan.jpeg

Source: “Gürkan Kumbaroğlu, “Rusya’dan Türkiye’ye kazan-kazan önerisi” (A ‘win-win’ offer from Russia to Turkey), Al Jazeera Turk, 5 December 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/gorus/rusyadan-turkiyeye-kazan-kazan-onerisi>

“This [pipeline to Turkey] will enable Russia to sell gas to Europe without being at the European Union’s mercy. This is also a vision project that turns Turkey into an ‘energy terminal.’ The cancellation of South Stream and the suggestion that Putin made to Turkey will increase Turkey’s strategic importance in the eyes of the European Union.

...

The Russian economy was deeply impacted by the sanctions in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis and the Ruble has lost 30% of its value since the beginning of the year. Therefore Russia turned East and agreed with China on a project that would allow it to export 68 billion cubic meters of gas. [And this project with Turkey] will allow Russia to export gas to Europe without being dependent on the EU.

...

This project has the potential to make Turkey an important actor in the global energy markets.”

(continued)

Continued: Realpolitik Drives Turkish-Russian Relations

dependence on Russia for so much of its energy needs puts it in a difficult situation: Turkey, unlike other members of NATO, did not impose sanctions on Russia after the Crimean crisis.
End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: Semih Idiz, “Animosity for the West Drives Erdoğan, Putin Closer,” Al-Monitor.com, 9 December 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/turkey-russia-animosity-west-erdogan-putin.html>

“The international isolation in which the two countries find themselves over a host of issues is...pushing Moscow and Ankara closer... Turkish-Russia ties took an unexpected turn during Putin’s one-day visit to Ankara for the ...High Level Cooperation Council [meeting], which was established in May 2010, and which once again appeared more like a joint Cabinet meeting with no fewer than 10 ministers on either side of the table.

...

Necdet Pamir, a leading Turkish energy expert underlined that, ‘This is not dependence on Russia for energy but overdependence. We are dependent up to our necks and now there are plans to increase this even more, including in the field of nuclear energy. This does not sound very rational,’ Pamir told Al-Monitor.”

Source: Soli Özel, “Kuzeyden gelen ziyaretçi” (The visitor from the north), Haberturk.com.tr, 3 December 2014, <http://m.haberturk.com/yazarlar/soli-ozel/1015234-kuzeyden-gelen-ziyaretci>

“It is impossible to find the Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit unimportant. But it seems that, the agreements signed during the visit have caused an exaggerated sense of euphoria and victory. First of all, this relationship does not at all look like one of equals. In the last six years, Russia had upended all of Turkey’s security calculations in the Black Sea and the Caucasus.

...Nevertheless, it is not surprising that relations are being handled in a way that serves both [countries’] interests. Even if you have ethical concerns, you have to manage your country’s business sometimes by silencing [your concerns]. They call this realpolitik. Unfortunately it prevents you from conducting a ‘value-based’ foreign policy.

It would not be incorrect to say that Russia gains more from these agreements. ...the pipeline mainly serves Moscow’s strategic priority to keep Ukraine under its control. ... With the new pipeline project, Ukraine will be left completely out of the picture. On the other hand, Turkey will enter the world energy picture because of the fact that the gas pipeline will go through its territory...

...

Finally, ... even though it is appropriate to continue a balanced relationship with Russia, it might be useful to remember that Turkey is a member of NATO. ”

Source: Dimitar Bechev, “Putin and Erdogan: Partnership of Convenience?” Aljazeera.com, 2 December 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/12/putin-erdogan-partnership-conven-20141227165377730.html>

“Though Putin’s visit will be remembered for the South Stream announcement, what is most remarkable about it is the continued development of Russian-Turkish relations, amid mounting tensions between Putin and the West.”

“Today, [the] Turkish Naval Forces, with its 158 naval platforms, nearly 50 air assets, amphibious brigade and special operations teams, is a formidable navy in the world stage. ..the Turkish Navy, with its ambitious procurement and modernization programs has set sail to be a ‘Medium Global Force Projection Navy’ in the near future.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The December issue of the Turkish military journal, Defence Turkey, featured an extensive interview with Turkish Naval Forces Commander Admiral Bülent Bostanoğlu. Bostanoğlu discussed the Turkish Navy's operational environment, regional vision, priorities, capabilities and plans. The accompanying passages point out some of the highlights from this interview.*

The Turkish Naval Forces are organized around four major subordinate commands, the Turkish Fleet Command, the Northern Sea Area Command, the Southern Sea Area Command and the Naval Training and Education Command. As the admiral discusses, the main responsibility of the Turkish Naval Forces is to protect Turkey's legitimate rights and vital interests in its sphere of influence, the Aegean, Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Seas. He says that his vision is to create a modern, versatile, interoperable and deployable navy by using local defense infrastructure and facilitating international cooperation. He notes that the Turkish Naval Forces, with its 158 naval platforms, nearly 50 air assets, amphibious brigade and special operations teams, is a formidable navy on the world stage and aims to become a medium global force-projection navy in the near future.

Regarding the Mediterranean, the admiral says that Turkey closely monitors the actions of the Greek Cypriot Administration, Greece and Egypt that would affect the maritime rights of Turkey in the Mediterranean, and claims that the Turkish Navy takes precautionary measures to protect Turkey's rights in its continental shelf. Regarding the Black Sea, Bostanoğlu says that Turkey maintains a policy of

Source: “Turkish Naval Forces have Set Sail Towards Becoming a Medium Global Force Projection Navy,” Defence-Turkey, December 2014 (Issue 56), <http://www.defenceturkey.com/index2.php?p=article&i=1758#.VJBIVUt160s>

“The main responsibility of the Turkish Naval Forces is to protect Turkey's legitimate rights and vital interests in its sphere of influence, namely [in the] Aegean, Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

....

Turkey's priority is to protect the maritime rights and her interests in the region besides minimizing the negative repercussions of long term disputes such as the Cyprus issue and recent social and political developments in the Middle East and North Africa since 2010.

....

In addition to Greek Cypriot Administration, Turkey has been closely monitoring the undertakings of littorals, especially of Greece and Egypt that would affect the maritime rights of Turkey in the Med, and Turkish Navy also takes every precautionary measure to protect Turkey's rights in her continental shelf.

....

Regarding the Black Sea, in the post the Cold War era, the development of regional maritime initiatives such as BLACKSEAFOR and Operation Black Sea Harmony among the Black Sea littoral states on the basis of mutual confidence and the positive impact of Monteu Convention have created a sea of peace and stability for the littorals and a safe haven for all.

Thus, Turkey's main policy towards Black Sea in this period has been based on the “regional ownership” from the beginning.

Although the recent developments took place in Ukraine and especially in Crimea have negatively impacted this positive atmosphere of cooperation among some Black Sea littorals, Turkey's main stance, “maritime security in the Black Sea should be sustained by the Black Sea littorals”, still continues. I believe there is no better way to maintain peace and security in the maritime domain of Black Sea in this regard.

...

In order to maintain peace and security while effectively delivering its mission for the contemporary challenges and risks, the Turkish Naval Forces is continuously transforming itself. The bedrock philosophy in this transformation is to create a modern, versatile, interoperable and deployable navy through exploiting local defense infrastructure and also facilitating international cooperation. The Turkish Navy is also evolving itself in the fields of manpower and material on the pillar of technology to meet the needs of today

(continued)

Continued: The Turkish Navy's Operational Environment and Vision

“regional ownership,” arguing that regional maritime initiatives such as BLACKSEAFOR and Operation Black Sea Harmony among the Black Sea littoral states have created a sea of peace and stability for the littorals and a safe haven for all. However, he adds that the recent developments in Ukraine and Crimea have damaged the cooperation among Black Sea littorals.

*The interview also features discussions on the Navy's training and international programs, which aim to achieve a force that is mission- and combat-ready in peacetime. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)***

and tomorrow. Modernization programs in surface and subsurface platforms have been accomplished successfully. I can proudly say that a majority of our assets now operate on national command and control systems and we can integrate various weapons systems to our platforms by national means.

Today, [the] Turkish Naval Forces, with its 158 naval platforms, nearly 50 air assets, amphibious brigade and special operations teams, is a formidable navy in the world stage. ..the Turkish Navy, with its ambitious procurement and modernization programs has set sail to be a ‘Medium Global Force Projection Navy’ in the near future.

...

Turkish Naval Forces Command established its training and education system in parallel with its mission requirements in order to have mission and combat ready units in peace time. The system has been designed in two sub-systems, supportive of each other; individual training/ education system and operational training system. All individual training of the Turkish Naval Forces is provided, evaluated and developed by the Naval Training and Education Command. In individual training, first aim is to train every personnel with the principle of “train as you fight”.

In that regard, officers and petty officers are to go through formal education in navy schools and follow task oriented education in training centers. The officers after attending a four-year education of engineering and international relation programs in the Naval Academy graduate with bachelor's degree. Upon graduation, officers are posted to shipboard duties. During onboard assignments, an officer has to fulfill branch officer, department head and executive officer duties to be qualified for commanding officer post.

Officers are given chances to attend Naval War College and Turkish Joint Command and Staff College respectively. Besides onboard duties, some officers can further develop their career in Naval Aviation, Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs), Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), First Class Diver; or can be reclassified as an engineer or an intelligence officer after taking relevant trainings....”

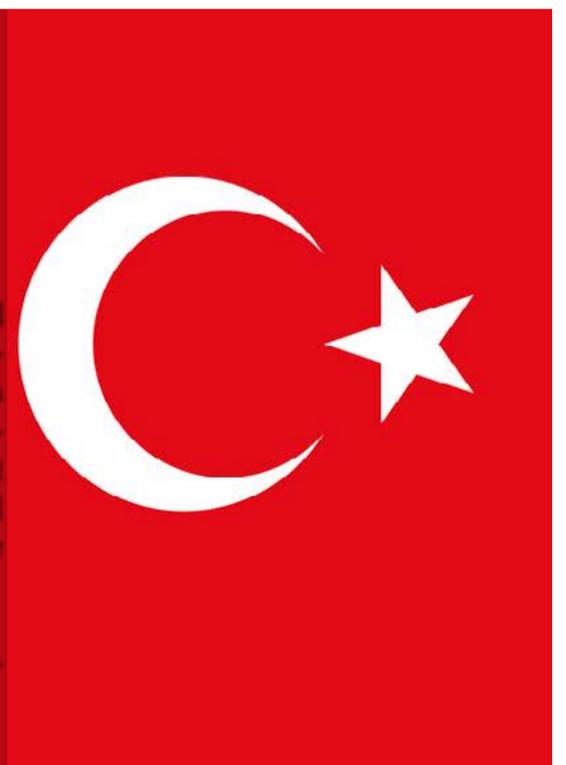


Turkey's Role in Afghanistan and Afghan Stabilization

By Karen Kaya

Turkey views its presence in Afghanistan not only as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission, but also as a “brotherhood duty” to help the Afghan people restore peace. Turkey's views towards Afghanistan are also based on its own strategic interests: as long as Afghanistan is unstable, the whole region will be unstable, posing a security threat to Turkey. When Afghanistan becomes a secure and stable country, this will introduce wider stability in the region, bringing new economic benefits for the region in general and for Turkey in particular.

http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20140831_art007.pdf



Source: “KKK, 2020’lı Yıllara Odaklanıyor!” (The Land Forces Command is Focusing on the 2020 Years!), Savunma ve Havacılık (Defense and Aerospace, Winter 2014, Vol. 28, No 163.

OE Watch Commentary: *The November–December 2014 issue of the Turkish-language military journal, Savunma ve Havacılık (Defense and Aerospace), featured an extensive interview with Turkish Land Forces Commander General Hulusi Akar. The accompanying passages provide some highlights of the interview, in which the general discusses the Turkish Land Forces’ vision for the future, its role in international peacekeeping missions, its views of the “future soldier” and more.*

Akar notes that, according to independent research, the Turkish military ranks eighth among the world’s top militaries in 2014, having moved up from eleventh place in 2013. He mentions that Turkey is in a difficult geopolitical region which is witnessing a period of uncertainty and crisis. He notes that the Army’s role is to minimize the effects of these crises on Turkey and be prepared at all times for any kind of war. The general claims that the threat environment is changing from one of predictability to unpredictability, from simplicity to complexity, with static alliances making way for dynamic partnerships and operations moving from conventional to asymmetrical.

Akar discusses his vision for the Turkish Army in the 2020s as being a deterrent force that can prevail in symmetrical situations, but also one that underscores hybrid operations. In addition to conventional forces, it would have capabilities that can handle asymmetrical environments and capabilities that would be used in the cyber, air and space domains. It will be a force which is ready for war at any moment, with a high degree of survivability, and a rapid reaction force with global reach and sensitive engagement capabilities.

He also discusses Turkey’s contributions to international peacekeeping missions, noting that the Turkish Armed Forces currently contributes some 920 personnel in Afghanistan, 368 in Kosovo, and 239 personnel in Bosnia

[Question] Taking Turkey’s geostrategic importance into account, what is the Army’s role in the country’s defense? What is the Army’s position within the Turkish Military? Can you provide an evaluation of the Turkish Army in comparison to other world armies in terms of quality and quantity?

[Answer] As events in our near geography have shown, the world, especially the region that Turkey is in, is going through a period of ‘uncertainty and crisis’. We are witnessing a lot of changes, from predictability to unpredictability, from simplicity to complexity in terms of threat perceptions, from threat-based planning to capability-based planning, from static alliances to dynamic partnerships, from conventional operations to asymmetrical ones. Thus, in summary, we need a flexible approach and a high level of preparedness for all kinds of war.

Turkey’s geostrategic location; while providing our country with countless opportunities and possibilities, also brings with it many uncertainties, risks and threats. In order for our country to be minimally affected by these and to contribute to global and regional stability, it is critical to have a strong military, with a deterrent army as one of its most important components.

...

As a result of our hard working personnel, today the Turkish military ranks among the world’s top militaries. This fact has been noted by unbiased foreign research organizations. The most recent study done on the topic was by St. Andrews University, which ranked Turkey 8th in the list of global military powers. Keep in mind that the same institute had ranked Turkey 11th in the year 2013, so it appears that we have moved up.

...

[Question] The developments and changes that have come about in the field of weapons and tools of war, have necessitated changes in the defense concept and force structures. In terms of the Turkish Army’s current organization and structure, can we get your views on its vision for the 2020 years? What kind of war fighting ability does the Turkish Army envision for the 2020 years?

[Answer] In today’s security environment, the threats are much more varied. In the new environment, crises can turn into conflicts very rapidly. Our country, which has been home to a number of civilizations, finds itself in the middle of a ring of fire, due to its geostrategic importance.

Within this context, our Army’s vision for the 2020 years is to be a deterrent force and a force that can prevail in symmetrical situations; but also one that underscores hybrid operations. In addition to conventional force use, it would have capabilities that can handle asymmetrical environments, and capabilities that would be used in the cyber, air and space domains; and a force which is ready for war at any moment, with a high degree of survivability. It would be a rapid reaction force, with global reach and

(continued)

Continued: Turkish Army 2020

Herzegovina in education, assistance and advisory roles. He adds that the Turkish Armed Forces plan to stay in Afghanistan after 2014 and contribute to Operation Resolute Support.

*Finally, the general discusses what the “future soldier” should look like and the research and development that is being conducted to create a soldier who will have the capability to fight on his own and have superior mobility, as well as a comprehensive system of technological capabilities. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)***

sensitive engagement capabilities.

...

[Question] The Turkish Armed Forces, which has undertaken important responsibilities within NATO and UN initiatives to protect international peace, has been leading the Kabul Regional Command in Afghanistan since 1 November 2009; and also has been participating in the KFOR operation in Kosovo since 1999. As the Army Commander, what can you say about international peacekeeping missions within NATO and the UN and our military presence and responsibilities in Afghanistan? Can we get your views on the upcoming period in Afghanistan?

[Answer] Turkey’s contributions to international peacekeeping missions started in 1950 with Korea. The Turkish Armed Forces currently contributes some 920 personnel in Afghanistan; 368 in Kosovo; and 239 personnel in Bosnia Herzegovina and provides

education, assistance and advisory roles.

In Kabul, Turkey has been leading the Kabul Regional Command since 1 November 2009. In addition, it has provided educational assistance to some 17 thousand Afghan security forces in Afghanistan and Turkey.

Turkey aims to provide permanent support to Afghanistan within the framework of NATO and its bilateral military relations, with a long-term view and based on legal foundations. Within this framework, Turkey will continue its support for the Afghan Army’s development following the [winding down of] ISAF and the start of Operation Resolute Support which is planned to start in 2015 as one of the four main countries supporting education, assistance and advisory roles in Kabul.

....

[Question] Based on a project called ‘Troop Modernization’, some NATO countries’ armies are improving the ‘Single Soldier’s combat tools and equipment. May we get some information regarding such efforts in the Turkish Army?

[Answer] When we consider the question, ‘What should the future soldier look like?’ we need to evaluate today’s and tomorrow’s political military situation and look at what other countries’ armies are doing regarding the future soldier, their current and possible future capabilities, the needs and capabilities of the future soldier.

As the Land Forces, we evaluate that the most important platforms in the future will be the ‘future soldier’ that would be able to fight on his own, in addition to air and land vehicles. Thus we are aiming for a ‘future soldier’ who has;

- Increased capability to protect others and increased survivability,
- Superior mobility,
- The ability to integrate into other systems via networks,
- A comprehensive system of technological capabilities (energy production, non-lethal systems, remote surveillance and control, etc.)

In addition to these, the soldier would have systems which improve his maneuver and resistance capabilities, liquid armor that would improve his survivability, a bio-sensor system that would identify and diagnose biological weapons, and robotic assistance systems that would improve his capacity to carry more [things]. We are continuing our research and development activities in these fields.”

Supreme Leader Says America behind Islamic Sectarianism, Radicalism

25 November 2014

“The takfiri orientation is Islamic on the face of it, but in practice, it is at the service of the great colonialist, arrogant and political orientations that are working against the world of Islam.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Ash-Sham, known alternatively by the acronyms ISIL, ISIS or, in Arabic, Da'ash, has threatened the interests of both Iran and the United States and upended security in the heart of the Middle East. President Obama announced on 10 September 2014 that the United States would launch airstrikes against ISIS not only in Iraq but also in Syria. According to numerous U.S. and Iranian press reports, Obama also sent a letter to Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei suggesting that the United States and Iran cooperate in the fight against ISIS.*

While the Iranian leader may not have formally responded with a letter of his own, the speech he delivered before the “World Conference on Extremism and Takfirism” suggests that Khamenei sees the United States more as the problem rather than the solution when it comes to ISIS. Takfirism refers to an Islamic doctrine in which those deemed to hold divergent or blasphemous views are not only declared outside the bounds of Islam, but are then subject to death.

In Khamenei’s speech, excerpted here, the Supreme Leader suggests that the United States has co-opted, if not created Sunni extremism to undercut Iranian influence and to soil the reputation of movements which he insists were behind the initial Arab Spring uprisings. In effect, Khamenei’s speech is a call for both Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims to stop fighting each other and instead recognize that the United States, Great Britain, and Israel are the common enemies. As such, it seems highly doubtful that the Iranian government will be willing to coordinate with the United States on a joint strategy to combat ISIS to a common end.

End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)

Source: “Biyarat dar Didar Sharkat-e Konandegan dar Kongareh-ye Jahani Jariyanha-ye Afrati va Takfiri az Didgah ‘Ulama-ye Islam” (Remarks in a Meeting with Participants in the World Conference on Extremism and Takfirism from the Perspective of Islamic Scholars), Khamenei.ir, 25 November 2014. <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=28278>

Remarks before the World Conference on Extremism and Takfirism

First, the purpose of this congress is attending to the issue of takfirism which is a harmful and dangerous orientation in the world of Islam. Although this takfiri orientation is not new and although it has a historical background, it is a few years now that it has been revived and strengthened with the plots of arrogance, with the money of some regional governments and with the schemes of the intelligence services of colonialist countries such as America, England and the Zionist regime...

There is an undeniable point which is the fact that the takfiri orientation and the governments which support and advocate it move completely in the direction of the goals of arrogance and Zionism. Their work is in line with the goals of America, the colonialist governments in Europe and the government of the usurping Zionist regime.

Certain signs confirm this claim. The takfiri orientation is Islamic on the face of it, but in practice, it is at the service of the great colonialist, arrogant and political orientations that are working against the world of Islam. There are clear signs which cannot be ignored. I would like to mention a few of these signs: one is that the takfiri orientation managed to make the movement of Islamic Awakening deviate from its path. The movement of Islamic Awakening was an anti-American and anti-arrogance movement which was against the elements that America had installed in the region.

It was a movement that had been launched by the masses of the people in different countries of North Africa. These countries were against arrogance and America. The takfiri orientation changed the direction of this anti-arrogance, anti-American and anti-tyranny movement. It turned it into a war between Muslims and into fratricide. The front line of fighting in the region was the borders of occupied Palestine, but the takfiri orientation came and changed this front line to the streets of Baghdad, the Jameh Mosque of Syria and Damascus, the streets of Pakistan and different cities of Syria. These places became the front line of fighting.

Take a look at the condition of today’s Libya, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan and see against whom the forces and swords of Muslims are being used. These forces should have been used against the Zionist regime. The takfiri orientation changed the direction of this fighting to our homes, our cities and our Islamic countries... This movement is at the service of arrogance. It is at the service of America and England. What they do is at the service of the intelligence services of America and England. It is at the service of Mossad and other such intelligence services.

“[Iran] has expanded its strategic borders in this fight against enemies to the Eastern Mediterranean and Northern Africa.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Western officials and analysts have long acknowledged Iran’s aspiration to be a regional power, but the definition of “regional power” is too often left ambiguous. Some consider Iran’s natural aspirations to be domination over the Persian Gulf and, indeed, Iranian leaders have not been shy about demanding that U.S. forces exit the Persian Gulf. As the inheritor of an imperial legacy, many Iranians assume a “near abroad” attitude toward all former lands once controlled by the Persian Empire, i.e., an area stretching from Afghanistan through Iraq and from the Caucasus south toward Oman. Over the past five years Iranian rhetoric has increasingly described Iran as a pan-regional power, a reference not only to its Persian Gulf interests, but also to its naval presence in the northern Indian Ocean.*

A recent article in Hezbollah News (Hezbollah here refers to Iranian hardliners rather than the Lebanese group of the same name) outlined a speech by Deputy Chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Hossein Salami, in which he suggests that the Iranian

government and military have expanded their concept of Iran’s “strategic borders” even further, making them synonymous with the entirety of the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region, as the U.S. government defines it. Hence, Salami brags about how while Iran once mounted its defense at the Kharkeh River, a 560-mile-long river that transects Khuzistan and feeds into the Shatt al-Arab, which became an important defensive line during the Iran-Iraq War, it now fights its enemies along the shores of the Mediterranean. Hence, the Iranian military now justifies its engagement in Syria in what amounts to a sectarian Monroe Doctrine and legitimizes involvement with religious movements of the Maghreb as part of Islamist solidarity. The Western assumption that sectarianism will permanently divide Shi’ite Iran from the Sunni states of the Arabian Peninsula and limit Iranian influence or its operational ambitions may be wrong.

*At the same time, the discussion of Iranian progress by Salami, who formerly commanded the IRGC Air Force, and his attribution of it to the embrace of resistance by the paramilitary Basij, suggest that major segments of the Islamic Republic are less interested in diplomatic rapprochement with the West than the rhetoric of some in the Iranian Foreign Ministry would suggest. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

Source: “Tefakr-e Basiji Enghalab ra dar Barabar Ziadeh Khvaha-ye Ghareb Nageh Dashteh Ast” (The Thinking of the Basijis has Protected the Revolution against the Greed of the West), Hezbollah News, 26 November 2014. <http://www.hezbollahnews.com/vdcizqaq.t1a3y2bcct.html>

The Thinking of the Basijis has Protected the Revolution

According to remarks in Isfahan by the deputy commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the thinking of the Basijis has protected the revolution against greed, and this thinking today is one of the greatest developments for the region....

If today we send the Safir satellite into space, and we can split the atom, and if we can access peaceful nuclear energy, and if we can build missiles to strike fear in the heart of our enemies, and if today, despite many economic sanctions, we have arrived at great successes in the aviation industry, refineries, and power plants, it is because of the thinking of the Basij.

While, one day, our nation was fighting the enemy at the shore of Karkheh River, now it has expanded its strategic borders in this fight against enemies to the Eastern Mediterranean and Northern Africa.

“When Islam’s liberating call is let out and when Islam raises its flag, its gravity attracts the world...”

OE Watch Commentary: Many revolutions lose their fervor over time as the reality of governance begins to favor pragmatism over ideology. While ordinary Iranians may long ago have shifted their focus from creating a perfect Islamic republic to instead putting food on the table for their families, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei remains as fervent as ever, and continues to use his leadership position to preach that religion, ideology, and military power must be interwoven.

Khamenei’s speech, excerpted here, to graduating cadets at Imam Ali University, a main training center for the Qods Force, suggests that he still envisions the Islamic Republic’s military—not only Revolutionary Guards but also regular army—as a force meant not only to defend, but also to engage more broadly in the Islamic world.

At the same time, Khamenei’s comments illustrate a world view very much in line with a “conflict of civilizations” rather than a “dialogue of civilizations” about which former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami once spoke. He interprets the “Arab Spring” uprisings not as local movements for greater accountability and democracy, but rather as Islamist movements battling against the secularism of Arab presidents. That so many Islamist movements have failed—in Egypt and Tunisia in particular—is proof to Khamenei not of the lack of attractiveness of the Iranian model, but rather Western plots to undercut Islam. Here, Khamenei’s rhetoric parallels that of many Sunni Islamist thinkers, such as the late Abdullah ‘Azzam (Usama Bin Laden’s mentor) and the Muslim Brotherhood, in arguing that Western culture is a deliberate plot to undercut and undermine Islam.

While Western officials might compartmentalize their problems with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iranian diplomats might also limit their diplomacy to specific issues such as Iran’s nuclear program, for the Iranian Supreme Leader, the problem between Iran and the West is not a particular grievance, but rather a broader conflict between religion and culture. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

Source: “Biyarat dar Hashtamin Marasam-e Danesh Amukhtegi Daneshjuyan-e Daneshgah-ha-ye Afsari Artesh” (Remarks to the Eighth Graduation Ceremony for Cadets of the Army University), Khamenei.ir, 17 November 2014. <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=28199>

Supreme Leader’s Remarks to Army Cadets

Today, the world of Islam or rather the entire world of humanity, needs your Islamic message and the message of the people of Iran. Today, the world is faced with many events which have taken place because of selfishness and greed. With the existence of new, destructive and deadly instruments, today the world is in the hands of those people who understand nothing except for their personal and collective temptations. They do not understand what virtue is and they know nothing about human values and principles.

In such a world, when Islam’s liberating call is let out and when Islam raises its flag, its gravity attracts the world and today, Islam has done this. Of course, the enemies react to this so that they can damage the reputation of Islam. They use art, the military, politics and all possible tools in order to achieve this goal.

Today, one of the important and fundamental tasks which is carried out in well-known art and entertainment institutions in the world is frightening people of Islam. Why is that? If Islam had not threatened the interests of those who swallow the world, these reactions would not have been produced. When you see that they create, sculpt, arm and support certain groups in the name of Islam and the Islamic government and when you see that they use them to kill people and create insecurity in countries, this indicates the influence of Islam’s message.

“... *Several armed Bedouin groups joined ISIL...*”

OE Watch Commentary: On 3 December the Lebanese daily, al-Safir, published an article titled, “Islamic State Threat Imminent in Daraa.” The article, which was republished in English by the news website al-Monitor, is excerpted here. As the title implies, it argued that rebels in Daraa Province face an imminent and dangerous Islamic State (IS) incursion. Daraa is the only Syrian province where rebels have made serious gains against the Syrian military and prevented the IS from establishing a significant foothold. Indeed it is the closest thing to a bright spot for moderate rebels: the Syrian government is on the retreat, rebels control a large swath of territory, and major inter-rebel violence has been averted. Its proximity to both Israel and Jordan makes Daraa Province regionally important.

Over the past few months rebels have overrun several government positions in Daraa, putting them close to knocking on Damascus's southern door. The sudden emergence of an IS threat in this area, according to many in the opposition, is a Syrian government machination aimed at rolling back rebel gains. For instance, the second accompanying article, taken from the All4Syria opposition news website, discusses negotiations in early November between the government and the IS for the latter to relocate from the outskirts of Damascus to Daraa. The aim, the author suggests, would be to provoke coalition strikes in Daraa and ease the threat against Damascus. Others claim that the Syrian government hopes to use the IS bogeyman to scare the Druze of Suweida Province into arming themselves and engaging rebels in Daraa. Regardless of the mechanism, the takeaway is that most, if not all moderate opposition groups see the government's hand in the IS's westward expansion.

The current chatter on IS expansion revolves around the hamlet of Bir Qassab, located in the arid steppe southeast of Damascus, in the northern corner of Suweida Province. Little more than around half a dozen small buildings, Bir Qassab lies along a smuggling route that is the rebel pipeline to the East Ghouta, through which fighters, weapons and goods flow across the desert and into the besieged suburbs of Damascus, as noted in the third accompanying article. A small group of local smugglers, allegedly numbering fewer than 80, pledged

Source:

دراعا: خطر «داعش» بات وشيكاً
Abdullah Suleiman Ali. “IS Threat Is Imminent in Daraa,” al-Safir. 3 December 2014. <http://assafir.com/Article/1/387659> (translation via: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/12/syria-daraa-islamic-state-alliance-eradicate-terrorism.html>).

Jabhat al-Nusra leaders expressed their concerns regarding the intentions of the Islamic State (IS) to enter Daraa. The news was reiterated in the command rooms of many armed factions, with information indicating that MOC Operations Center drew a red line to forbid IS from entering the city, which is especially fragile... The Jordanian intelligence, a main party in the MOC, fears that IS groups in Bir al-Qasab might meet some sympathizers or people who pledged their allegiance to the organization in Daraa. As a result, the al-Bukamal scenario in Deir ez-Zor — which fell in the hands of IS overnight after the leaders of Jabhat al-Nusra pledged their allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi — risks being repeated.

Source:

”بشار الأسد“ يفاوض لخروج ”داعش“ من جنوب دمشق إلى درعا
Fawwaz Tello. “Bashar al-Assad Negotiates for ISIL to Go from Southern Damascus to Daraa,” All4Syria. 11 November 2014. <http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/178173>

All4Syria obtained verified information from a reliable source within al-Hajjar al-Aswad south of Damascus on ongoing talks between ISIL leaders from eastern Syria and the Syrian regime to ensure the safe passage of ISIL fighters from al-Hajjar al-Aswad to Daraa Province, as the regime's wants, or to the east of Syria, as ISIL wants. With this the regime aims to avoid the possibility of coalition airplanes entering Damascus's airspace to strike ISIL, which would hinder regime warplanes and artillery from shelling Damascus and the East and West Ghouta. Furthermore this would help justify coalition and regime warplanes shelling Daraa, which would benefit regime forces which are on the retreat in Daraa. Thirdly, this would open the door for similar negotiations with other groups in order to retake southern Damascus.

Source:

”ريف دمشق: المعارضة تحشد لمعركة مصيرية ضدّ ”داعش“
Rami Suweid. “Rural Damascus: The Opposition Gathers for a Decisive Battle against ISIL,” al-Arabi al-Jadid. 12 December 2014. <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/40580d07-194e-4a43-b63c-3da8e92bb094>

... [Bir Qassab] helps secure the rebel supply line toward Damascus's East Ghouta, which [rebels] control... ISIL pre-empted the rebel announcement ... of a unified command meant to coordinate military operations against them... by buying off some of the small groups affiliated with the opposition, with the goal of bringing them into their ranks and for the first time declaring their clear and open presence in rural

(continued)

Continued: The Islamic State's Westward Expansion

allegiance to the IS and began arresting and attacking fighters of mainstream Islamist groups operating in the area. The fourth accompanying excerpt gives some details on the group's leaders. These events were of particular concern to Jaysh al-Islam, which had already launched a successful offensive against IS fighters in the East Ghouta last summer.

*The IS thrives in environments of fragmented power, and their emergence near Damascus and Daraa, regardless of who is behind it, may be a harbinger of growing volatility. The group's westward expansion from its Euphrates strongholds may be subtle and diffuse, but that does not make it any less real. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

Damascus... "Several armed Bedouin groups joined ISIL," according to a local source. These groups have been in the area for a long time and are active in smuggling and transporting military defectors across the Syrian Desert to areas under the control of ISIL and the opposition.

Source:

“تنظيم الدولة” بريف دمشق: هل حكم على الغوطة بالموت؟

“The IS in Rural Damascus: Will the Ghouta Be Condemned to Death?” alsouria.net, 11 December 2014. <http://goo.gl/rRiAtx>

[Our correspondent] noted that this group has no more than 80 people and is led by a defected Lt. Col. named “Abu Motasem,” while a man called “al-Mukahil” is the military leader of a group that was known as the “Faithful Young Men” (al-Shabab al-Sadiqin). He added that “Abu Motasem” was initially under the command of the Rural Damascus Military Council. He is a man of multiple loyalties, having joined Jabhat al-Nusra, fought with the Free Syrian Army, and now pledged allegiance to the Islamic State. As for al-Mukahil, according to Abu Ahmed, a local FSA leader, “Al-Mukahil was at odds with various local factions, and the IS were the only ones willing to protect him.”

Al-Qaeda's Road to Damascus? Syria and the Abdullah Azzam Brigades

By Mr. Lucas Winter

Since the outbreak of sustained violence in Syria over the past year, the presence of foreign Islamist fighters has become a growing concern to the crumbling Syrian government, rebels in the Free Syrian Army, NATO, and Syria's neighbors. This article examines the role played by the al-Qaeda-affiliated “Abdullah Azzam Brigades” since the start of the Syrian uprising. By doing so, it hopes to provide a context for better understanding of the dynamic interplay between the Syrian insurgency and al-Qaeda.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Al-Qaeda's-Road-to%20Damascus.pdf>

“... For the regime to remain and become a partner to the coalition, this would be the greatest disaster ...”

OE Watch Commentary: In Syria's far eastern province of Dayr az Zawr, sandwiched between Raqqa (Syria) and al-Anbar (Iraq), the Islamic State (IS) and Syrian government forces are engaged in a pivotal battle for control over the province. The stakes are high for both parties. After stalling recently in both Iraq and Syria, the IS needs a major victory. The Syrian military, for its part, cannot afford to be chased out of Dayr az Zawr as it was from Raqqa Province in August 2014. In that episode IS fighters overran three military bases in under a month and published photos and videos of the torture, beheading and mass slaughter of Syrian military personnel.

Fears of the Raqqa scenario repeating in Dayr az Zawr have brought the families of Syrian soldiers to the streets of the Alawite-majority town of Masyaf (Hama Province). As the first accompanying article explains, the families are demanding to know the fate of their sons stationed in Dayr az Zawr. Of the presumed two thousand or so soldiers believed to remain in the Dayr az Zawr base (as of early December 2014), many are believed to be either Alawites or Druze. Essam Zahreddine, a Republican Guard commander who is a member of the Druze minority and has been one of the most prominent and successful Syrian military leaders in the current war, is leading the government's defense of Dayr az Zawr. According to the second accompanying article, IS fighters are being commanded by the group's overall military leader, Umar al-Shishani. The article also notes how, just as it did in Raqqa, the IS is relying heavily on information warfare.

The battle for Dayr az Zawr is also a litmus test for Operation Inherent Resolve. Both the Syrian government and the rebels are seeking to benefit from coalition actions. For supporters of the Syrian government, serious resolve in fighting IS dictates coalition intervention against the IS positions in Dayr az Zawr. An IS victory, after all, would provide the group with a major boost in morale and armaments. Indeed, many pro-Syrian government media are prematurely heralding the arrival of an unofficial alliance between Syria and the international coalition, as illustrated by the third accompanying article.



"Essam Zahreddine, the Syrian government's main commander Dayr az Zawr".

Source: http://www.aksalser.com/?page=view_articles&id=37ce7dfa5821526343bf5d3e8d92bdcb

Source:

تواصل القتال بمطار دير الزور وأهالي الجنود يحتجون بحماسة

"Fighting Continues at the Dayr az Zawr Airport as Families of the Soldiers Protest in Hama," al-Jazeera. 9 December 2014. <http://goo.gl/NAwxO6>

At the same time, the Hama Media Center reported on what it called large protests in the pro-regime city of Masyaf in rural Hama. The people called for information on the fate of their sons stationed in the Dayr az Zawr Military Airport. The report added that military security responded by firing on the protestors.

Source:

سورية: جيش "الخلافة" بقيادة الشيشاني يصل مطار دير الزور

Alexander Ayoub. "Syria: the Khilafa Army, Led by al-Shishani, Arrives to Dayr az Zawr Airport." Al-Arabi al-Jadid. 5 December 2014. <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/8d3f7cc3-0e3c-4103-b129-214668fe797d>

Regarding soldier morale within the military airport, the source noted, "During clashes at the airport's walls over the past two days, we heard them screaming on their handheld radios. The IS is relying on information warfare and spreading fear among them. They hung the heads of 19 government soldiers on the walls of the airport, in addition to sending threatening radio messages."

(continued)

Continued: Dayr az Zawr and Inherent Resolve

*The moderate Syrian opposition, in contrast, has been staunch in rejecting coalition intervention against the IS in the battle of Dayr az Zawr. The main reason put forth is that many of those fighting with the IS in this battle are, in fact, local moderates who have joined the organization out of necessity. At least in Dayr az Zawr, the Syrian opposition prefers the IS to the Syrian government, as illustrated in the fourth accompanying article. Indeed, the only thing that the regime and the opposition seem to agree on is their belief that the outcome of this battle may well hinge on the actions of the coalition. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

Source:

تحالف أمريكي – سعودي – سوري ضرب “داعش” بمحيط مطار دير الزور!
 “American-Saudi-Syrian Coalition Strikes ISIL near Dayr az Zawr Airport!” al-Hadath.
 7 December 2014. <http://www.alhadathnews.net/archives/144212>

American fighter jets, along with Saudi and Emirati members of the international coalition, joined the Syrian Air Force in strikes near the Dayr az Zawr Airport... despite the enmity between the regimes in Damascus and Saudi Arabia, their interests are aligned in Dayr az Zawr...

Source:

رسائل سياسية وميدانية لمعركة “داعش” في دير الزور
 Absi Samim. “Political and Operational Messages in ISIL’s Battle for Dayr az Zawr,”
 al-Arabi al-Jadid. 5 December 2014. <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/c6dbdb0e-bea7-4255-abce-1f3f463688b5>

The IS’s plan seems meant to show the coalition that even after all the strikes it is able to launch an offensive to control all of Dayr az Zawr... [Former FSA commander of the eastern zone, COL Mohammed] al-Aboud said that... “despite our enmity toward ISIL, we in Dayr az Zawr have lost control over our region, whether to the regime or to ISIL. For the regime to remain and become a partner to the coalition, this would be the greatest disaster”... al-Aboud believes that “the organization declaring full control over Dayr az Zawr is not unlikely, and it could happen in two or three weeks. This will depend on the sincerity of the intentions of the coalition and the extent to which they coordinate with the criminal regime in Damascus.”

OE Watch Commentary: *In late September 2014 Huthi fighters and their allies took over Yemen's capital, Sana'a, with nary a fight. The following month they struck a deal with Yemen's president to appoint a consensus government in which ministries and portfolios were distributed among the parties in advance. President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi retained the defense portfolio and in early November he officially appointed Major General Mahmoud al-Subaihi as his new defense minister.*

Al-Subaihi's appointment represents a rehabilitation of southern military leaders, as the first accompanying article notes. Like Hadi, al-Subaihi made his career as an officer in the military of South Yemen prior to unification in 1990. Unlike Hadi, al-Subaihi fought with the south in Yemen's 1994 Civil War and left the country after the south was defeated. He returned some fifteen years later to occupy several high-level posts, including commander of the al-Anad military base, located in al-Subaihi's home province of Lahj, and commander of the recently created Fourth Regional Command, which comprises much of former South Yemen (including the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the important cities of Taiz and Aden).

Al-Subaihi inherits a fickle and fragmented army. Indeed, according to the second accompanying article, the only solution to Yemen's growing lawlessness is the creation of a truly national army. Al-Subaihi's first major step in this regard came with his 24 November announcement that Huthi militiamen would be integrated into the military and security forces. The initiative is controversial: while many (including the Huthis) endorse the proposal, others believe that it will lead to further fragmentation. The third accompanying article, from the English-language Yemen Times, gives a flavor for some of the arguments used to oppose the initiative.

Source:

محمود الصبيحي... من رصيف المهجر إلى وزارة الدفاع اليمنية
Adel al-Ahmadi. "Mahmoud al-Subaihi... From the Sidewalks of Foreign Lands to the Yemeni Defense Ministry," Mareb Press. 11 November 2014. http://marebpress.net/news_details.php?lng=arabic&sid=104627

The new defense minister is very popular among his soldiers due to his courage and modesty... the appointment of al-Subaihi as defense minister signals a reconsideration of military leaders from Lahj and al-Dali' who were sidelined following the 1994 war...

Source:

اللواء الصبيحي والمهمة الشاقة
Aref al-Dowsh. "General al-Subaihi's Difficult Tasks," al-Gomhoriah. 25 November 2014. <http://www.algomhoriah.net/articles.php?id=50019>

Specialists and the general public agree that the army is not a national army meaning that the prime loyalty of its leaders, officers and personnel is not toward the nation and the constitution... there is a major dilemma that Defense Minister Mahmoud al-Subaihi will face, namely that some military units are mostly constituted by men from a particular region ... the only way to get rid of the armed militias mushrooming across the country is by building a professional, national Yemen Army with leaders and officers that represent all of Yemen's groups...

Source: Khalid al-Karimi. "Defense Minister Calls for Houthi Integration into Security Forces," Yemen Times. 25 November 2014. <http://www.yementimes.com/en/1836/news/4614/Defense-minister-calls-for-Houthi-integration-into-security-forces.htm>

The source added that Houthi troops are poorly trained and equipped and are not fit for military service. Their inclusion into the structure of Yemen's armed forces will not facilitate or address the present lack of cooperation, he said. On the contrary, such a decision might lead army units that are hostile to the Houthis to break off and start operating independently, the source explained.

Source:

الجيش ما بين القوة الأولى وتحول الحوثيين إلى قوات نظامية
Hussein al-Liswas. "The Army between the Principal Force and Incorporating the Huthis," al-Masdar. 3 December 2014. <http://almasdaronline.com/article/64959>

We can say that a new military reality has been created. The forces that have become known as the Presidential Guard, and which are under the command of the president, have theoretically and practically become the primary force in the country... The Huthis may be the dominant force on the ground, but they have not turned into a professional, organized fighting force nor have they joined the Yemeni Army as an official brigade. Therefore, even if this militia is the dominant force in practice it is not part of the armed forces landscape, despite the fact that it is the reason for the radical transformation in this landscape.

(continued)

Continued: The State of Yemen's Military

*Over the past couple of years Hadi has restructured Yemen's military and replaced several top commanders. Up until the Huthi takeover of Sana'a, though, the military remained largely beholden to two poles of power, one led by former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, the other by General Ali Mushin al-Ahmar. When the Huthis entered Sana'a in September 2014, Ali Muhsin fled Yemen, and it is unclear whether he will be able to regain his share of influence. As a result, the military balance of power is in a state of flux, as explained in the fourth accompanying article. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

A MODERN HISTORY OF THE FREE SYRIAN ARMY IN DARAA

By Lucas Winter, Foreign Military Studies Office

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

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

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



Concerned about al-Shabaab, Ethiopia and Kenya Consider Buffered Borders with Somalia

“Kenya is holding talks with Ethiopia to likewise create their buffer zone inside Somalia to police their common border against insurgency from the militants,” [said] William Ruto, deputy president of Kenya.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Though recently there have been significant successes by the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali government forces against the terrorist group al-Shabaab, Ethiopia and Kenya, both of which share Somalia’s western border, are still concerned about cross-border attacks. As the accompanying article notes, this apprehension is being translated into consideration of creating buffer zones inside Somalia. The very idea of establishing these areas, with unknowns such as their dimensions and which security forces would patrol them, is a sensitive one among several groups. Somalia, though struggling after years of war, is still recognized as a sovereign nation, and while its central government appreciates the foreign armies helping in the fight against al-Shabaab, it has not extended a long-term welcome for such ventures as buffer zones on its soil.*

Ethiopia has not been the scene of any cross-border al-Shabaab attacks. Kenya has not been so fortunate. Perhaps the most well-known of these attacks was on 21 September 2013 at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, which resulted in at least 67 killed, including 4 of the attackers, and over 175 wounded. Other less spectacular, but still lethal al-Shabaab attacks inside Kenya include a recent one in a quarry, where non-Muslims were separated from Muslims and then executed, resulting in at least 36 dead.

Many of these attacks have been launched because Kenyan troops are in Somalia fighting al-Shabaab, thus angering the radical Islamists who, unable to successfully attack the foreign troops on Somali soil, look for soft civilian targets in the countries supplying soldiers. Thus, al-Shabaab has also taken out its anger on Uganda, which, while not bordering Somalia, does have troops assigned to AMISOM. Still, it has been Kenya, which conveniently for the terrorists actually borders Somalia, that has suffered the brunt of the attacks. As for why Ethiopia, which like Kenya also borders Somalia and has troops there battling the terrorists, has not been the site of al-Shabaab attacks, there are several reasons. To begin with, a significant part of Ethiopia’s border is with Somaliland - a large, relatively peaceful area of Somalia which desires to be its own sovereign state - leaving Ethiopia the ability to concentrate its main protective efforts on the smaller portion of its Somali border that does present a danger of cross-border attacks. Additionally, Ethiopia has fairly successfully implemented programs such as community policing that have helped prevent terrorist attacks.

*There has been, as was previously mentioned, significant progress against al-Shabaab. Should the terrorist group ultimately be defeated, as some experts are predicting, the need for such buffer zones could become a moot point. However, at present, with the threat of cross-border attacks by al-Shabaab against Ethiopia and successful attacks by the terrorist group against Kenya, the two countries continue to contemplate establishing buffer zones in Somalia to separate them from a very dangerous enemy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Source: “Ethiopia Cautious About Establishing Buffer Zone in Somalia,” The Reporter, 6 Dec 2014, <http://www.thereporterethiopia.com/index.php/news-headlines/item/2862-ethiopia-cautious-about-establishing-buffer-zone-in-somalia>

Ethiopia is considering the establishment of a buffer zone inside Somalia to deter cross-border attacks from Al-Shabaab with high caution, a senior government official said.

...sources within the ministry told The Reporter that the country is cautiously approaching the matter due to the “sensitivity” of the issue.

“The move could lead to wrong interpretations by some groups. We do not wish to see a repeat of the 2006,” the source told The Reporter.

In July 2006, Ethiopian forces entered Somalia claiming that it has faced direct threat posed by the Islamic Courts Union (ICU)... The decision to enter stirred controversy with some accusing Ethiopia of meddling in the internal affairs of Somalia.

Following recent attacks by Al-Shabaab inside its territory, the Kenyan government disclosed this week plans to setup buffers zones inside Somalia along the 800km-long border it shares with the country.

Although Ethiopia shares a ... border with Somalia, the terrorist groups never succeeded in mounting such cross-border attacks in Ethiopia. A senior official at MoFA told The Reporter that Ethiopian government has been strengthening its bilateral and multilateral security agreements in the region to quash the threats posed by Al-Shabaab.

Kenya's Rise in Intercommunal Attacks; Hard to Quantify, Hard to Stop

4 December 2014

“Cattle rustling and revenge killings are termed common in Northern Kenya's remote and impoverished regions in which automatic weapons are many.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Intercommunal conflicts in Kenya, which, as the accompanying article relates, have significantly risen since last year, are fought over many issues, including cattle rustling, land and water rights, and political representation. There are also the bloody revenge attacks which frequently cycle to a next higher level of carnage. Make no mistake, Kenya is not the only African country where such conflicts are relatively common. Countries that achieved independence several decades ago, as well as the continent's newest nation, South Sudan, have not found themselves immune to these often deadly assaults.*

To the observer who learns about Kenya through large-scale foreign media such as international televisions, the presence, or at least the degree of such intercommunal conflict might come as a bit of a surprise. From the standpoint of violence in Kenya, the foreign press has mainly been covering attacks by the Somalia-based al-Shabaab terrorist organization. As an example, the world's eyes turned to Nairobi when al-Shabaab struck the Westgate Mall, leaving at least 67 dead, including 4 attackers. However, coverage of the intercommunal conflicts which plague northern Kenya has been significantly less, though the number dead from such incidents in 2014 is more than four times that of the Westgate Mall attack. Part of the reason for this difference in worldwide attention is probably attributable to the loss of life in the Westgate attack being over a very short period, whereas the intercommunal conflict toll is for nearly an entire year. Additionally, the attack on the mall was an act of terrorism in a city with fairly good media coverage, and some of the victims were Westerners. The intercommunal attacks tend to play out far from urban environments, far from the media, and with the involvement of few, if any Europeans or Americans.

The remoteness of many of the intercommunal conflicts, combined with some groups dealing internally with the death of a tribal member without reporting it to authorities, calls into question the figure of 310 reported deaths from intercommunal conflict so far in 2014. This difficulty in assigning an exact number means some research projects looking at ways to prevent bloodshed have to rely on imprecise values. As an example, the widely known and well-respected Uppsala Conflict Database provides low and high estimates, as well as a best estimate, for the loss of life in fighting in Kenya between two armed opponents, what is called a dyad. Though each dyad's range (the highest estimated number of deaths minus the lowest number of deaths for fighting between two specific groups) is generally relatively small, there are a large number of dyads in Kenya, reflecting significant fighting among many different ethnic groups. The sum total of these relatively small ranges of deaths in each conflict adds up to a fairly large number, but there is a lot of uncertainty as to the exact figure..

*While this accompanying article puts part of the blame for the rise in intercommunal violence on stress among pastoralists from a drought, other articles in the African press suggest the rise might be attributable to Kenya's general state of insecurity following al-Shabaab terrorist attacks. Though there are plausible rationales behind such thinking, such as diversion of troops to terrorism protection and away from maintaining the peace among opposing communal groups, more research is sorely needed to determine exactly why so many are being killed in intercommunal violence and how to stop it. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Source: Over 300 Killed, 220,000 Displaced in Kenya Conflict in 2014 - Four Times More than 2013: UN, Mail and Guardian Africa (Kenya), 4 Dec 2014, <http://mgafrica.com/article/2014-12-04-over-300-killed-220000-displaced-in-kenya-conflict-in-2014-un/>

By end October 2014, 310 people had lost their lives, 214 had been injured and 220,177 had fled their homes as a result of inter-communal conflicts attributed to revenge attacks, competition over land and water resources, cattle rustling, and struggles over political representation,” the report said.

The number of displaced is four times that of 2013.

But clashes have escalated this year due to harsh drought, as well as tensions sparked by the decentralization of political power, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said.

“Violent conflicts involving pastoralists have become widespread and increasingly severe in the northern Rift Valley and north-eastern regions of Kenya,” OCHA said.

A Red Card for Morocco? Soccer, Ebola, and International Relations

“Whatever the real motivation, another casualty of this decision [regarding the soccer tournament] is certainly Morocco’s efforts over the last few years to reconcile with its African neighbors, and perhaps also to re-apply for membership of the African Union (AU).”

OE Watch Commentary: *It is not just a game; it is soccer, and in Africa there are enormous repercussions for refusing to host a soccer tournament. As the accompanying article notes, Morocco, fearing that visitors coming to see a tournament might bring Ebola with them, has committed just such a transgression, refusing to allow the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), scheduled for 17 January to 8 February 2015, to be played there. In fairness, Morocco did not state unequivocally it would not host the games, but instead requested a delay of six months to a year in order for the Ebola outbreak to subside. The rebuttal from the Confederation of African Football can be summed up by the organization moving the games to Equatorial Guinea.*

Morocco has lost more than just the tournament. Having been heavily criticized throughout much of Africa for holding onto the Western Sahara and still not being a member of the African Union (AU) for that very issue, hosting the games was part of its strategy to improve relations with the rest of the continent in general and its West African neighbors in particular. Unfortunately for Morocco, that strategy has backfired, leaving many angry at the country for agreeing to host the tournament but then changing its mind.

Even before the soccer fiasco, many saw a difficult, if not impossible climb for Morocco to obtain AU membership while the status of the Western Sahara remained unresolved. Still, Morocco appeared to be making some progress in improving its image following efforts such as providing 250 peacekeepers to the Central African Republic. Now people are taking to social media, accusing the country of xenophobia and human rights abuses and texting angry messages, such as “Morocco is scared of outsiders” and “Morocco is not an African country.”

Medically there appears to be little reason for Morocco’s fears. The country has hosted other international events with no significant issues. Screening for the disease - though not 100% effective - would be in place, and simple measures such as hand-washing help prevent Ebola’s spread. Still, the Moroccan government fears large numbers of people from neighboring countries would travel overland and enter unscreened, putting the large tourism industry at risk, should an outbreak occur.

*As the accompanying article relates, there are serious consequences for Morocco’s action, from the previously mentioned troubled appeal for AU membership to aggravation of its already acrimonious relations within the Arab Maghreb Union. Relations among other African nations, such as between Senegal and Guinea, have been strained during the Ebola outbreak, but none have received the coverage Morocco’s cancellation of the games has garnered. To paraphrase the article, which provides an overview of the situation using soccer parlance, Morocco’s action has resulted in the rest of Africa giving it a red card. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Source: Liesl Louw-Vaudran, “Ebola Deals a Blow to Morocco’s Africa Plans,” Institute for Security Studies (South Africa), 2 Dec 2014, <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/ebola-deals-a-blow-to-moroccos-africa-plans>

Morocco’s refusal to host the Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) from 17 January to 8 February next year, due to fears of Ebola has sparked a furor among soccer lovers across the continent.

Sharon Ekambaram, head of the Neil Aggett unit of Medecins Sans Frontieres in South Africa, said it was highly regrettable that Africans are resorting to xenophobia because of the uncertainty and ignorance around how Ebola is spread.

Some Moroccans say that if an Ebola outbreak does occur in their country, it could scare off tourists, which would be disastrous for the economy.

Re-admitting Morocco to the AU seems a pipe dream while the Western Sahara issue remains unresolved, especially since its most ardent enemy on the continent, South Africa, is taking the lead on many issues within the AU.

Hosting Africa’s biggest sporting event would have brought much goodwill to Morocco, but this has now backfired in a big way.

“I can assure you that all police formations in Lagos are always working to be a step ahead of any eventuality.”

OE Watch Commentary: Nigeria's coastal megalopolis of Lagos is Africa's largest littoral city with, according to some estimates, a population of more than 20 million. Unlike other regions of Nigeria, which are mired in religious or ethnic conflict, Lagos remains out of the fray. The city's indigenous Yoruba population is almost equally divided between Muslims and Christians, but has a tradition of maintaining ethnic unity in the face of rising religious intolerance in the country. However, after a young woman carried out a suicide bombing near a petrol tanker there in June 2014, for which Boko Haram claimed responsibility, the public feared that Lagos' peaceful coexistence could be under threat.

According to a 7 December article in the Nigerian newspaper, *Leadership*, there are rumors swirling in Lagos about the possibility of more attacks on ports there. A series of attacks there could undermine the city's rapid economic growth, which keeps youths employed and contributes to stability. The article in *Leadership*, however, dismissed the threat of a new wave of attacks in Lagos and cited various security agencies in the city. The Lagos State Police Command assured the public that it had adequate manpower to prevent future attacks.

With presidential elections scheduled for February 2015, which are likely to be contentious, and increased levels of violence in northeast Nigeria, where Boko Haram is based, the Lagos State Police Command's messages are welcome news for the people in Lagos. Destabilization of the city would have ramifications for the rest of Nigeria, as well as the coastal waters of the country. These waters have been prone to piracy, oil bunkering, and other forms of militancy in recent years, but so long as Lagos is stable, the security forces in the city can expend their resources to keep the waterways and ports secure for shipping and trade and not have to deal with uncovering possible Boko Haram sleeper cells. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



The ports of Lagos and waters near Nigeria's coast are among the busiest in the world, but thus far Boko Haram attacks have not become a problem. source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lagos#mediaviewer/File:Lagos_Island.jpg

Source: “Police Deny Reports Of Planned Attack By Boko Haram On Lagos Seaports” *Leadership*, 7 December 2014.

Police Deny Reports Of Planned Attack By Boko Haram On Lagos Seaports

The Lagos State Police Command has denied a reported planned attack by Boko Haram on the Lagos seaports, saying that there was no report on such in the domain of the state police command. The report quoted the commissioner of Police in charge of the Western Ports Command, Mrs Hilda Ibifuro-Harrison, as saying that an intelligence report three months ago revealed the threat. But the Lagos State Police Command in a reaction to the report said it received no report of such threat.

The spokesperson of the command, Mr Kenneth Nwosu, said “I can assure you that all police formations in Lagos are always working to be a step ahead of any eventuality.” He maintained that the duty of the police is to protect lives and property and uphold the law always. “The strategy in place is to have adequate manpower ready in every part of the state so that nothing untoward happens,” he added.

“The central thesis of the article is indisputable: guerrillas can be beaten...”

OE Watch Commentary: *The level of angst among many Colombians regarding the negotiations that the FARC has been conducting with the Colombian government in Havana continues to deepen. One of the themes of the debate revolves around the question of whether or not a guerrilla organization like the FARC can be beaten at all. As Colombians have observed, if one begins from a theoretical assumption that they cannot be beaten, the list of potential resolution mechanisms for their internal war is obviously shortened. While that list might include negotiations for the sharing of political power and defeat by the guerrillas, it obviates any continued effort to beat the guerrillas militarily. It is, as many Colombian commentators see it, essential defeatism.*

*That view (that guerrillas cannot be beaten), as expressed by Colombian security affairs commentators, is wrong, ahistorical, and highly destructive of military morale. Recently, part of the blame for said defeatism, according to them, comes partly from popular military writing out of the United States. Colombians are becoming explicit in denouncing as a defeatist influence the intellectual currents of prescriptions and excuses coming from the North. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)***

Source: José Alvear Sanín, “¿Es derrotable la guerrilla?” (Can the guerrilla be defeated?), *El Mundo*, Medellín, December 3, 2014. http://www.elmundo.com/portal/opinion/columnistas/es_derrotable_la_guerrilla.php#.

“It’s all I can do to draw the readers’ attention to the review of both books [Knife Fights by John Nagle and Why We Lost by Daniel Bolger], sure that one of our generals will occupy himself reading these debatable texts, because my purpose is none other than to point out how the Colombian Army, one of the few in the world that has been successful in the business of counterinsurgency, is being systematically weakened by a partisan judicial apparatus, neutralized by an ambivalent and ambiguous [defense] minister, and undermined by its senior commander, to the point that, on the verge of completing its triumph over the subversives, has been obliged to withdraw and to eat bitter fruit, that it accept the fact that a practically defeated narcoguerrilla be equipped as a “high party” in order to conspire with the government the surrender of the country’s institutions and the opening, as equals, the doors that lead to power...”

Source: Eduardo Mackenzie, “Las guerrillas, mito y realidad” (The guerrillas, myth and reality), *Periódico Debate*, December 4, 2014. <http://periodicodebate.com/index.php/opinion/columnistas-nacionales/item/7140-las-guerrillas-mito-y-realidad/>

“The central thesis of the article by José Alvear Sanín is indisputable: guerrillas can be beaten, but that depends on the determination of the armed forces and the morale of their adversaries. In Colombia, the FARC and the ELN have been defeated on various occasions. But the incapacity of administrations that think of the communist phenomenon as a political-intellectual question and not as a violent global expansionist apparatus, could not consolidate its victories, and several times tolerated that these apparatuses of death be reconstructed. The creators and motivators of these guerrilla organizations, the Soviet Union and Cuba, need these apparatuses in order to advance their global power game. The worldwide Cold War may have ended, but in Colombia it continues and relapses.”

“...the Constitutional Court specified that the only crimes that could not be linked to politics are grave human rights violations.”

OE Watch Commentary: Flexibility of mind is on display in the negotiations that the FARC is conducting with the government of Colombia regarding how the results of the guerrilla war in Colombia are going to look. Many Colombian commentators seem each day more gobsmacked than the previous regarding the possibilities for compromise. This month Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos suggested that the crime of drug trafficking could be redefined as a political crime, thus making it absolvable under the auspices of the political negotiations. This would neatly dispose of dozens of indictments against the FARC leadership. The Colombian president clarified that this definition was not to be generalized, however, but would apply only to the FARC, not to other drug lords.

The new framing was put into a bit of context by ex-President Alvaro Uribe, who published what appears to be a genuine list of the FARC demands if they are to allow the talks to resume. The fact that Uribe published the FARC's list was itself controversial in that it could ostensibly undermine the negotiation process. The items within the list itself were received by many Colombians as mind-numbing, and, although the FARC's demands can be seen as but negotiating positions, the new government's stance regarding the definition of FARC drug trafficking makes no concession seem ridiculous. According to these Columbian commentators, any land the FARC is claiming to own could be protected from government expropriation; the FARC could be left in control of immense "campesino reservations," the FARC could be given mineral royalties, and FARC families could be deemed victims due government reparations payments.

End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)

Source: Nelson Ricardo Matta Colorado, "E.U. apoyaría que el narcotráfico fuera delito político": Bill Clinton, (USA Would Support Drug Trafficking Being Demmed a Political Offense: Bill Clinton), El Colprensa and Colombiana, Medellín, 10 December 2014, <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/e-u-apoyaria-que-el-narcotrafico-fuera-delito-politico--bill-clinton-KG855826>

"Attorney General Eduardo Montealegre indicated that the Constitution did not expressly forbid that drug trafficking be considered an offense linked to rebellion, and therefore Congress could further legislation on the subject.... Attorney Ricardo Hoyos Duque, expresident of the State Council, opined that the proposal was not so ridiculous, if one were to keep in mind the recent decision wherein the Constitutional Court specified that the only crimes that could not be linked to politics are grave human rights violations.

Source: Mary Anastasia O'Grady, "Una concesión peligrosa en las conversaciones de paz en Colombia" (A Dangerous Concession in the Peace Conversations in Colombia), The Wall Street Journal, 8 December 2014, <http://goo.gl/slhvNI>

"...the President [Santos] clarified his declaration. Not all drug traffickers would meet the requirements of having their offenses reclassified, he said. Rather, the proposal would be an incentive offered by the government 'specifically' for the drug traffickers of the (FARC)...."

Source: La Otra Cara, "Polémica por denuncias de Uribe sobre condiciones de Farc" (Controversy surrounding Uribe's Complaint about the FARC's Conditions), La Otra Cara, Bogotá, 8 December 2014, <http://laotracara.co/destacados/polemica-por-denuncias-de-uribe-sobre-condiciones-de-farc/>

"...The list [of FARC demands] published by ex-President [Uribe] is as follows"

1. The Administration must agree to drop the designation as terrorists when referring to the FARC.
2. The Colombian armed forces must cease all forms of bombardment.
3. The Colombian armed forces must cease launching any high value target operations (operations against FARC leadership).
4. Diminish mobile brigades and ground combat units.
5. Properties belonging to any member of the FARC are not to be made object of government expropriation.
6. The government must agree, in order to come to a satisfactory ending of the peace process, to:
 - A. : A. Provide the guerrilla foot soldier with a [monthly?] subsistence payment of 1,800,000 [Colombian pesos or \$900?] for 5 years while they prepare themselves professionally and adapt to civilian life. B. Logistically and financially maintain the

(continued)

Continued: How to End the Drug War

security of the [FARC] secretariat [senior leadership] C. Give economic reparations to the families of guerrilla commanders killed by the Armed Forces. D. Shelve and close whatever investigations are being conducted against whatever member of the FARC. E. Every guerrilla that is currently in prison must be liberated and their all cases against them likewise closed. F. Erase all criminal mention and charges on government and Interpol web pages. G. Disallow slander or disparagement of the FARC on the international level. H. Permit the FARC to have its own TV and radio station for the purpose of freely expressing and communicating its ideas. I. Act with justice against anyone who act against the FARC and its ideas.

7. The campesino reservation zones are to be verified and controlled by the FARC.

8. The FARC, as a political movement, must receive mineral and hydrocarbon exploitation [royalties] at a percentage to be mutually agreed to with the government.”

ATTACKS IN CHILE TAKING A DANGEROUS TURN TO TERRORISM

By Brenda Fiegel, Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS

Since 2005 anarchist groups have detonated explosive devices in non-populated areas within Chile during late night hours on at least 198 separate occasions. This brief paper examines these attacks and how extremist cells of anarchist groups are capable of carrying out large-scale terrorist attacks.



DIÁLOGO
DIGITAL MILITARY MAGAZINE

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/attacks-in-chile.pdf>

“Waiting in line is the new Venezuelan way of life.”

OE Watch Commentary: *In a multimedia special for the leading Bogota daily, El Tiempo, correspondent Valentina Lares offers a matter-of-fact multimedia presentation of how things are in Venezuela. The special is one of a series in which each of Venezuela’s neighboring countries is treated to a broad-brush but elegantly presented geographic summary. Ms. Lares divided her description of Venezuela into four parts or sub-articles: the challenge of Venezuelan daily life, Venezuelan outflow migration, the effect of the collapsing price of oil on Venezuela’s rentier economy, and Venezuelan government suppression of the free press.*

*One could read any number of negative reports on Venezuela these days and perhaps come away attributing their dire descriptions to an opposition perspective. When a mainstream press travelogue reads like Armageddon it might serve to alarm us a bit more. According to the El Tiempo piece, the Venezuelan economy is not going to get better any time soon, an increasing number of Venezuelans are desperate to escape their country, and the Venezuelan press is not in a position to report the truth about what is happening. If one were looking for the next failed state or the next humanitarian crisis, this article makes Venezuela look a likely candidate. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)***

Source: Valentina Lares Martiz, “Venezuela”, El Tiempo, 4 December 2014, <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/e-u-apoyaria-que-el-narcotrafico-fuera-delito-politico--bill-clinton-KG855826>

“Waiting in line is the new Venezuelan way of life. Lines to buy wheat for tortillas or airline tickets, according to the need. From perhaps five in the morning people begin to gather at the doors of marketplaces or pharmacy chains in order to ‘whatever they’ve got’...”

“Venezuela, the ideal refuge for immigrants from the decade of the 40s to the 80s -- Spaniards, Italians, Portuguese, Lebanese, Colombians -- today is territory to a ‘massive outflow.’”

“The calculation of economists and analysts is simple and tragic. For every dollar that the price of crude oil falls, Venezuela loses \$700 million in profits, a math that leaves no doubts: if in January the price of oil was at \$96.14 a barrel and today is around \$68 dollars per, the country has failed to feel the impact of \$19.6 billion, equal to its current international reserves. Just in the last two months the price of a barrel fell almost \$20.”

“A process that accelerated in recent years and furthered by the official state structure dedicated to counter the exercise of journalism, reduce spaces (in images, sounds or words) for criticism, and to promote a unified body of messages for the praise and promotion of ‘the bolivarian revolution’ and its leaders.”

OE Watch Commentary: *An estimated 50,000 drones will be operational in Caracas, Venezuela, by April 2015, according to this source. Miguel Rodríguez Torres, Venezuela's Interior Minister of Justice and Peace, further indicated that the drones will be used to monitor densely populated areas throughout the country, with the end goal of reducing crime. Although the model of the new drones was not mentioned in this source, El Universal released an article in August 2014 regarding the use of small helix drones for monitoring purposes in Caracas. End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)*

Source: "Rodríguez Torres: Plan de Seguridad incluirá radares y drones con cámaras" (Security Plans Include Radars and Drones with Cameras), El Universal. Accessed on 1 November 2014 from <http://www.eluniversal.com/sucesos/141020/rodriguez-torres-plan-de-seguridad-incluire-radares-y-drones-con-camar>

Drones in Venezuela

Venezuela will be using drones and radars in high population areas by 2015 with the end goal of strengthening citizen security. As reported by Miguel Rodríguez Torres, Venezuela's Interior Minister of Justice and Peace, a total of 50,000 drones of unspecified make/model will be utilized to monitor ground activity. He further indicated that because cameras on the drones will be integrated into the telephonic emergency helpline, response times by authorities will decrease.

As for the radars, they will be utilized to detect gunfire.

The Evolution of Drones in Venezuela

In 2012, Hugo Chavez announced the creation of a drone program with the help of Russia, China, and Iran. Later in the year, the first Arpia Model drone (Harpy) was developed by Cavim (Venezuelan Military Industrial Company) with the help of Venezuelan military engineers who were trained in Iran. The Arpia is small and can be used for remote controlled long distance surveillance up to 100 km or 90 minutes. Cameras on the drone can transmit in real time. They weigh 85kg and have a maximum cargo capacity of 17 kg. The initial model with technological transfer agreements from Iran is said to have cost Venezuela an estimated \$28 million.

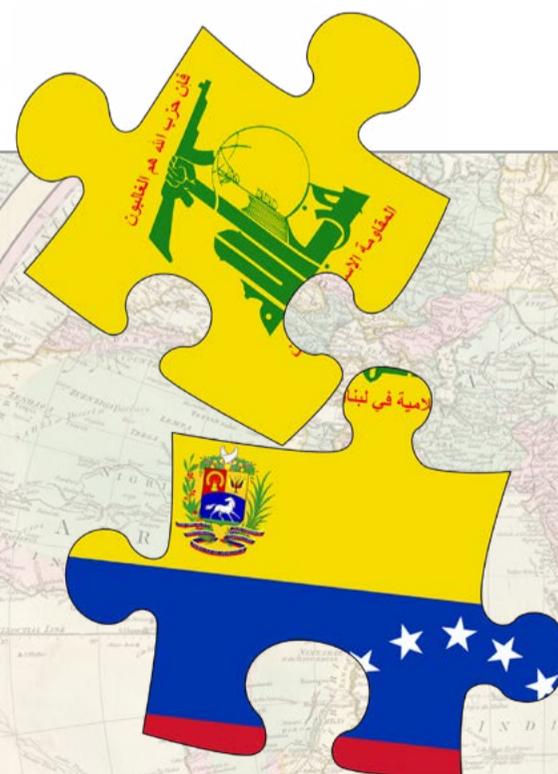
Radical Islam's Western Foothold:

Hugo Chavez and Hezbollah

By Sam Pickell

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

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



The Proliferation of Narco Taxis in Chilpancingo de los Bravo, Guerrero

15 August 2013

Source: “La proliferación de los “narcotaxis” en México” (The Proliferation of Narco Taxis in Mexico), BBC Mundo. Accessed on 28 November 2014 from http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2013/08/130813_mexico_narcotaxis_guerrero_jcps

OE Watch Commentary: *According to this article, taxi drivers are valuable employees for drug-trafficking organizations because their work allows them to be present at key locations without raising suspicion. As seen in past instances, they are able to wait outside of airports, government buildings, hotels, and bars without being forced to move for security reasons. Another benefit to using taxi drivers is that on any given night in a populous city, hundreds of cabs are circulating in virtually every area of that city. Moreover, because taxi drivers working at the service of drug cartels are taught to notice any changes in their specific sector of the city, they can easily detect the presence of a rival trafficking organization attempting to infringe on the territory of another cartel. End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)*

The Proliferation of Narco Taxis in Chilpancingo de los Bravo, Guerrero

An estimated 200 narco taxis are currently operational in Chilpancingo de los Bravo, Guerrero. What differentiates narco taxis from legally registered taxis is that they generally do not have license plates and/or the number on their vehicle is 520 or higher. When on shift, narco taxis are utilized by drug trafficking organizations to report on movements by authorities and rival groups in addition to transporting and selling drugs. But the situation of narco taxis is not exclusive to Guerrero. Taxis are also commonly used by drug trafficking organizations in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, and Cancún, Quintana Roo. However, this phenomenon is relatively new in Chilpancingo as it was first noted in early 2013.

Shortly after the appearance of narco taxis in the capital city of Chilpancingo, community organizations wrote a letter to President Enrique Peña Nieto indicating that the state government had issued at least 150 false permits to narco taxis. Citizens further indicated that as a group, they were inept to stop narco taxis as large portions of the state were already controlled by drug trafficking organizations and supported by municipal, state, and federal government officials. In response to the letter, the Mayor of Chilpancingo publicly recognized the issue but indicated that he was neither Superman nor the Lone Ranger and was not willing or able to tackle the problem on his own. The Director of Transportation and Roadways of Chilpancingo further added that he did not issue false permits and placed responsibility on the federal government and military for not having intervened.

Narco Taxis Used by Government Officials

This source further indicated that in Guerrero, narco taxis are not exclusively reserved to work at the service of drug cartels. Instead, they are also utilized by government officials to protect government buildings and inform on citizen protests. In the days following the September 26, 2014 disappearance of 43 university students, protests were held outside principal government buildings in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero. In the streets surrounding these protests, taxis without license plates and slogans on the side of their cars reading “violence directly affects the state economy” remained parked and ready to take action if prompted.

Social Media: The Impetus of Change behind Narco Communications in Mexico

30 August 2014

Source: “La guerra de los narco mensajes en México” (Narco Message Wars in Mexico), Vanguardia. Accessed on 19 November 2014 from <http://www.vanguardia.com.mx/laguerradelosnarcomensajesenmexico-2153931.html>

OE Watch Commentary: Mexican drug cartels began using narco banners to send messages to both rival cartels and the local populace in 2006. Content contained within these messages generally includes job recruitment ads, warnings to rival criminal organizations, propaganda against the government and warnings to the local populace regarding possible surges in violence, among other things. This means of communication flourished throughout the Calderon administration during which time an average of 52 narco banners were hung on a monthly basis. While narco messages are still a popular means of communication, the way in which they are disseminated has changed drastically since the start of the Pena Nieto administration, as blogs and social media now serve an important role in cartel communication and broadcasting efforts. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

Social Media: The Impetus of Change behind Narco Communications in Mexico

The gunman’s index finger grasps the trigger of the 9 mm pistol. He pulls it and a mist of gunpowder is released as the bullet exits the chamber. The gunman then pulls the trigger a second time and all that is heard is the resonance of a gunshot outside of the Nuestra Señora de la Salud Chapel in Michoacan. Moments after the second gunshot, citizens come out of their homes and find the body of a completely nude 40-year-old male with a narco message on his back that reads as follows “You are next.”

The Intended Purpose of Narco Messages in Mexico

Narco messages became known as the official calling cards of drug cartels in 2006 and since that time, have been utilized to send a wide variety of messages to specific audiences. For example, narco messages are used to differentiate one criminal organization from another, to intimidate, and to send messages in the form of a warning, propaganda or simple information, amongst other things. These same messages are almost always signed by a cartel and posted in public venues. Today, narco messages are still a popular means of communication, but social media outlets and online blogs now serve as key venues utilized by cartels to send their messages to a larger audience.

From News Media to Social Networking

Violence sells and during the Calderon administration, narco related incidents often grabbed headlines. In fact, narco messages with pictures of decapitated bodies only fueled viewer interest so it made sense for news sources to report on these incidents. However, by reporting on narco messages, news media sources realized that they were inadvertently serving as a public voice for drug cartels. In an attempt to stop this trend, representatives from multiple syndicates gathered together in May 2011 during which time they made a pact to not report on narco related violence. But despite their efforts, cartels triumphed and are now extremely proficient in using social networking and blogs to post gruesome videos and narco banners with threatening messages.

For example, Los Zetas and multiple other cartels now post gruesome videos and photos online instead of in public venues. These items are quickly shared and posted on sites such as El Blog del Narco, Narco Noticias, Mundo Narco and Youtube. Cartels directly benefit from posting messages on the internet as it allows them to disseminate information quickly while simultaneously reaching a large audience. Many prominent narcos also have their own Facebook and Twitter accounts where they post pictures of themselves with gold-plated weapons, exotic pets, and flashy vehicles. Similarly, cartels are using the internet to recruit new members and to re-assert their dominance in specific regions.

In closing, cartels are still using narco messages to intimidate rival cartels and citizens. However, the medium used to disseminate these messages has changed. This is because social networking sites and internet blogs have proved to be effective outlets for cartels. As the new generation of narcos assume leadership roles, it is likely that they will continue using the internet as their principal means of communication.

11 Year-Old-Girl May be the Youngest Drug Mule Ever Arrested by Authorities in Colombia

19 November 2014

Source: “Colombia: niña de 11 años tenía 104 cápsulas de cocaína” (11-Year-Old Swallowed 104 Cocaine Filled Capsules in Colombia), El Comercio. Accessed on December 01, 2014 from <http://elcomercio.pe/mundo/latinoamerica/colombia-extraen-104-capsulas-droga-nina-11-anos-noticia-1772408>

OE Watch Commentary: *Traditional drug mules come from all walks of life, but those chosen to traffic drugs on international flights are generally attractive, well-dressed, and between the ages of 18-40. Drug traffickers commonly employ these human couriers to transport illegal drugs such as cocaine and heroin packed in latex capsules which are swallowed, but a recent case involving an 11-year-old girl has Colombian authorities on high alert. This is because the girl is believed to be the youngest mule ever detected in the country. The case in question occurred in Cali, Colombia, and, as reported by this source, has authorities wondering if drug-trafficking organizations are now targeting young children, which would represent a shift in their drug mule modus operandi. End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)*

An 11-year-old Colombian girl narrowly escaped death after her father apparently made her swallow more than 104 cocaine-filled capsules to smuggle the drugs into Europe. And while drug mules are nothing new in Colombia, this case is significant because the girl is believed to be the youngest mule ever detected in the country. More concerning yet is that it could mean traffickers are now targeting young children instead to work as international drug mules. This potential new trend may be attributed to the fact that custom systems worldwide are not set up to check every person. Furthermore, the average person wants to believe that children are innocent and that they are not going to be the ones smuggling narcotics and cartels realize that.

The case in question was reported in mid-November after a cocaine filled capsule burst in the 11-year-olds stomach in Cali, Colombia. While performing emergency surgery on the girl, authorities were stunned to find over 104 capsules weighing 1.2 pounds. Authorities further reported that young girl and her father would have boarded a plane headed to Spain with a layover in Madrid had the capsule not burst. The final destination was reported as the Canary Islands. During a search of the family's home, officials found passports and the stub of a boarding pass in the father's name that showed he had travelled from Barcelona to Cali via Madrid on 15 October. They also discovered that the girl originally travelled to Spain in March and stayed for two months, but do not know whether or not she transported drugs on that trip.

“Georgia started to intensify contacts in the Oceania region after several small island nations in the Pacific recognized Georgia’s breakaway [sectors] Abkhazia and South Ossetia.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu is a little known archipelago that lies north of New Zealand and east of Australia. Since 2011 conflicting reports circulated regarding with whom it sides – the breakaway nation of Abkhazia or Georgia.*

After the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia gained independence. At that time, less than one-fifth of the people living in Abkhazia were ethnic Abkhaz. The rest of the population was predominately Georgian. Tensions grew and conflict broke out. Finally, in 1999, Abkhazia gained independence from Georgia.

In June 2011, according to sources in Moscow, Vanuatu became the fifth government to agree to formally recognize Abkhazia’s sovereignty. However, according to Ambassador Donald Kalpokas, Vanuatu’s representative to the United Nations, officials in Port-Vila, the country’s capital, have not recognized Abkhazia. Over the next month, media reports, many from Russia and New Zealand, seemed to counter each other on whether or not Vanuatu did indeed recognize Abkhazia’s independence.

One month later, according to the Vanuatu Daily Post, Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Carlot “reconfirmed that Vanuatu recognizes the State of Abkhazia.” Carlot argued that the reason other countries did not recognize Abkhazia as an independent state was due to the issue of oil. This is likely a reference to the role of Georgia as a key oil and gas transit country.

More recently, in May 2013, Georgia’s presidential press service, Saakashvili Press, reportedly claimed that Vanuatu revoked its recognition of Abkhaz independence and now recognized Georgia. Two days later a report released by Apsnypress, the official news agency of the Abkhaz separatist government, claimed that the deputy foreign minister of Abkhazia denied Saakashvili’s assertion that Vanuatu had revoked its recognition of Abkhaz independence.

Each side would go back and forth over the next few months, one claiming that Vanuatu had revoked its recognition and the other saying it

Source: “Foreign Minister Says Oil an Issue over Non Recognition of Abkhazia,” Vanuatu Daily Post, 14 July 2011, <http://www.dailypost.vu/content/todays-dailypost-frontpage-thursday-14-july-2011?quicktabs_1=1>.

Foreign Minister says oil an issue over non recognition of Abkhazia

Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Carlot has told the Daily Post the reason that a number of countries, such as the US and EU bloc, do not recognize Abkhazia as an independent state. It is because of the issue of oil. [Likely referring to the role of Georgia as a key oil and gas transit country.]

Minister Alfred Carlot said Vanuatu’s stand on the issue is clear and that is that the people of Abkhazia should and must be free to determine their own destiny and not be governed by another state.

Source: “Саакашвили убедил Вануату отказаться от признания независимости Абхазии (Saakashvili Persuaded Vanuatu Not to Recognize the independence of Abkhazia),” Pravda, May 20, 2013, <<http://www.kp.ru/online/news/1443082/>>.

Saakashvili Urges Vanuatu Not to Recognize the Independence of Abkhazia

“I would like to make everything clear once and for all by publicly announcing that Vanuatu recognizes the territorial integrity of Georgia and does not recognize Abkhazia as an independent state,” – according to Saakashvili press.

Source: “Tbilisi Claims Vanuatu Recognized Abkhazia and S. Ossetia as Parts of Georgia,” Interfax, 14 July 2013.

Tbilisi claims Vanuatu recognized Abkhazia and S. Ossetia as parts of Georgia

On Sunday the Georgian Foreign Ministry announced that corresponding documents were signed in New York on July 12 by ambassador of Vanuatu to the United Nations Donald Kalpokas and Georgian charge d’affaires to the United Nations Vakhtang Makharoblishvili.

...

“It is true that there are differences of opinion in the government of Vanuatu about the recognition of Abkhazia. However, there has been no decision on severing diplomatic relations between our countries. What the prime minister of Vanuatu said in a conversation with Saakashvili is his personal point of view that has not materialized in a government decision,” [Deputy Foreign Minister of Abkhazia Irakly] Khintba said.

(continued)

Continued: Vanuatu: A Tiny Island Nation Can Create Ripples

had not. More often than not, Russian media sources claimed that Vanuatu did recognize Abkhazia. As of 2014, according to press reports from New Zealand and Georgia, Vanuatu now supports Georgia.

Currently, the only nations that recognize Abkhazia are Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and the island nations of Nauru, and (maybe or maybe not) Vanuatu, depending on who is telling the story and when. The rest of the world chooses to remain neutral. In 2011 Tuvalu, another Pacific island nation, recognized Abkhazia's independence, but then retracted it in March 2011.

While the number and capability of the countries recognizing Abkhazia may seem insignificant, it is particularly interesting that these three islands – Vanuatu, Nauru, and Tuvalu – had, at least at one time, stepped up to show their support. It begs the question – Why? It is also worth noting that Georgia, according to the last article, has intensified its contacts in the Oceania region, since there had been a trend of siding with Abkhazia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

Source: Civil Georgia, "New Zealand FM Visits Tbilisi," Civil.ge, 15 July 2014, <<http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27487>>.

New Zealand FM Visits Tbilisi

Georgia started to intensify contacts in the Oceania region after several small island nations in the Pacific recognized Georgia's breakaway Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In 2011 a Georgian parliamentary delegation, led by then parliament speaker Davit Bakradze, visited Australia and New Zealand, which was then followed by a visit of then Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze to the same countries, as well as to Fiji. Last year Georgia established diplomatic relations with Vanuatu, a small island state in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean, which affirmed its support to Georgia's territorial integrity, putting an end to confusion and uncertainty surrounding Vanuatu's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2011. In March, 2014 Tuvalu, a tiny island nation in the South Pacific, retracted its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

FALLOUTS OF THE UTTARAKHAND DISASTER IN INDIA: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

uttarakhand

By Dhanasree Jayaram, India

The role of national militaries in the recovery from natural disaster is a common reality all across the world. In the region of Indo-Asia Pacific, both objective environmental dangers and the central role of national militaries as a central national institution are ubiquitous. An obvious interface amongst these modern militaries is through mutual concern and common capability regarding natural disasters. The tragedy that occurred in Uttarakhand, India in May of 2013, due to the inevitable confluence of man's changes to the landscape and the irresistible forces of nature, provides a sample of problems and participants in this struggle for sustainable development and the consequences of failure.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/international/India/Uttarakhand-disaster.pdf>

“PM Modi condemns ‘brutal’ and ‘inhuman’ attack on CRPF jawans.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The decades-old separatist insurgent movement, first known as the Naxalites, remains at a continual simmer in the affected areas of India. Currently called “Maoist” in the regional press, insurgents routinely ambush paramilitary units, assassinate elected leaders, destroy public and private equipment, exact taxes from local populations, and kill at will those they consider informants. With the change of national government under the new leadership of Prime Minister Modi, changes in policy and tactics have been expected.*

Most recent attacks against the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) have been chronicled in the article from India Express. Once again a successful ambush has exacted a heavy toll against national forces. This event is even more spectacular as it occurred during a major police and paramilitary operation meant to neutralize the Maoist cadres in a large part of the state of Chhattisgarh. More background details are given in the report from The Times of India, printed almost a month prior to this attack. This piece emphasizes the ongoing intelligence operations that provide increased warning of attacks, yet often downplay Maoist capabilities and prowess. A short article from Indo Asian News Service reports the expansion of the Maoist portfolio into contract killings.

Several reports in the Indian media have gone beyond the historic discussion about grievances against government policies and exploitation of natural resources, to the more prosaic issues of tactics and equipment that should be brought to bear against the “ultras.” An article from The Times of India and another from an exclusively online news source, NITI Central, illustrate this. The NITI Central piece is a part of the new conversation that is bolstered by the Government of India’s statements regarding the use of the full spectrum of national power against the ongoing problem. This is a significant departure from policies and approaches of past national governments. The Union Home Ministry has laid out the road ahead, as reported in the article from DNA India.com.

There is no doubt that the Maoist insurgency will not go away of its own accord, nor will

Source: The India Express, “Chhattisgarh Maoists attack: PM Modi Condemns ‘Brutal’ and ‘Inhuman’ Attack on CRPF Jawans,” December 2, 2014 <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/13-crpf-personnel-killed-in-maoist-ambush/#sthash.Kuk4SA8B.dpuf>

In the CRPF’s biggest single-day casualty in Chhattisgarh this year, 14 of its personnel, including two officers, were killed in a Maoist attack ... At least 15 personnel have been injured — five are reported to be in a serious condition. The victims, including Deputy Commandant D S Verma and Assistant Commandant Rajesh Kapuria, were from the 223 battalion of the CRPF. “Our parties were inside (the forest) for an operation when the Maoists ambushed them. Fourteen personnel were killed,”...

According to reports, a huge team of over 550 CRPF and state personnel had left the police camps in Chintagufa and Kankerlanka for the operation on Saturday. One party was led by CRPF IG (Chhattisgarh) H S Siddhu. At around 2 pm today, the security personnel reportedly faced Maoist resistance near Tondamarka village in Kasarpad. Maoists opened heavy fire, and the ambush lasted for over an hour. The rebels also looted a significant number of weapons. “The forces have returned to the Chintagufa camp. The chopper could not fly because of low light,” said Vij. Air support could not be provided to rescue the injured personnel and get the bodies. Today’s incident took place in the same region where seven personnel were injured in a Maoist attack just over a week back, when the rebels had managed to hit the Mi 17 that had been sent to evacuate the injured. Considered a “liberated zone”, the forces have rarely been able to venture into this area. “It is a challenge for the country. I am personally hurt by this incident,” said Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh today... The attack has come at a time when Chhattisgarh has been citing record Naxal surrenders in the last six months. Just yesterday, Chief Minister Raman Singh had said “the Maoists would be finished from Chhattisgarh soon”....

Source: The Times of India, “IB Warns Jharkhand police of Chhattisgarh-like Maoist ambush,” November 18, 2014 http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/IB-warns-Jharkhand-police-of-Chhattisgarh-like-Maoist-ambush/articleshow/45184230.cms?inttarget=no&utm_source=TOI_AShow_OBWidget&utm_medium=Int_Ref&utm_campaign=TOI_AShow

RANCHI: The Intelligence Bureau has warned Jharkhand police of a possible Chhattisgarh-like Maoist ambush in assembly segments situated along the interstate border. Most of 13 assembly segments going to polls on November 25 are situated on the Jharkhand-Chhattisgarh-Odisha border. “Among all Maoist-hit states, only Jharkhand is going to polls thus the rebels will try to make a mark to try to regain lost ground,” said Ranchi IG M S Bhatia who termed IB’s warning a routine....

At the slightest suspicion, forces conduct anti-sabotage checks. Over 15,000 CRPF jawans, deployed for poll duty, mostly carry out road opening exercises and scan roads for bombs...

(continued)

Continued: Maoist Insurgence in Modi's India

*the Government of India respond in the same manner as years past. This most recent blow to the CRPF may very well be the catalyst for a fuller measure of force to fall among the disaffected throughout the 24 states of India reporting insurgent activity. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)***

IG Rourkela, R K Sharma, ... said: "Six companies of CRPF personnel will maintain strict vigil along Jharkhand border till elections are over to stop Maoists cross border movement." ...

"Maoists have mellowed down but that does not guarantee zero strike," said a senior IPS officer, adding police should take not take any warning causally.

During Lok Sabha polls, Maoists had killed eight polling personnel.

Source: Indo Asian News Service, "Maoists now contract killers, say Jharkhand Police," November 24, 2014 <https://in.news.yahoo.com/maoists-now-contract-killers-jharkhand-police-090005785.html>

It's not news that Maoist guerrillas have been killing people to extract levies in Jharkhand. But now, police say they have evidence that Maoists in the state are indulging in contract killing.

Jharkhand's Khuti district is one the worst Maoist-violence hit districts of the state. Here, people are killed by Maoists almost every week. The two Maoist organisations - Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist) and People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI) - are active in the district...

"We have now found a new trend -- Maoist guerrillas are indulging in contract killing. We have blocked levy collection at many points, and to generate resources, PLFI members are indulging in contract killing," a police official from Khuti district told IANS...

Maoist guerrillas are active in 18 of Jharkhand's 24 districts.

Source: Times of India, "CRPF asks govt to replace Insas guns with "AK rifles," November 13, 2014 http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/CRPF-asks-govt-to-replace-Insas-guns-with-AK-rifles/articleshow/45129997.cms?intenttarget=no&utm_source=TOI_AShow_OBWidget&utm_medium=Int_Ref&utm_campaign=TOI_AShow

NEW DELHI: At a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is stressing on 'Make in India', CRPF has said bye-bye to locally made Insas rifles. The largest force fighting Maoists has written to the government to replace all Insas rifles it uses with AK (47/56) rifles because of the former's poor operational quality...

The move is a fallout of the government's push to the forces to launch all-out offensive against Maoists. This has resulted in the force increasingly using area weapons such as 81 mm mortar guns and automatic grenade launchers. "While we had these guns earlier, we used them sparingly. However, now we have done extensive training with BSF and are using them more and more," Trivedi said.

Mine protected vehicles (MPVs), however, are not finding favour with the force with the vehicles being increasingly proving ineffective due to the massive amount of explosives used by Maoists in a mine. Ironically, they are now being used on those roads which have been checked by a road opening party and cleared of mines. "MPVs are to be used sparingly and only when we are sure there is no mine under the road. Maoists are using as much as 100 kg of explosives in a mine, making the utility of MPVs ineffective," Trivedi said.

Source: NITI Central, "CRPF Maoist Attack – Why aren't we using Drones?" December 02, 2014 <HTTP://WWW.NITICENTRAL.COM/2014/12/02/CRPF-MAOIST-ATTACK-ARENT-USING-DRONES-247867.HTML>

...Maoists are operating in 10 of India's 28 States and unleashing havoc in as much as 180 districts... Chhattisgarh is one of the most Maoist infested States....

The Maoists are waging a war against the nation. They are a brute bunch of anti-nationals out to break India. They are funded by anti-India forces from outside India. A study by Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses has estimated that the annual fund raising of the CPI (Maoist) is a whopping Rs 140 crore.

(continued)

Continued: Maoist Insurgence in Modi's India

The Maoists mock at the Constitution of India. They seek to destroy our republic, the fabric of our democracy and our rule of law.

...In an era of technology, we need to see more innovation in hunting down Maoist terror.

...The Indian Armed Forces have been operating UAVs for over a decade. The Indian Army was the first to acquire UAVs, in late 1990s from Israel, followed by the Air Force and Navy. India has so far bought 12 Israeli-made Searcher tactical UAVs in 2012 for intelligence gathering over the Maoist-infested regions of Chhattisgarh and Odisha but failed. The use of Drones in anti-Maoist operations has not been very effective. The reasons perhaps had less to do with technology and more to do with the operational aspects.

It is hightime the teething problems with the use of Drones for Internal Security and anti-Maoist Operations were addressed so that the War on Maoist is waged on multiple fronts with no further loss of valuable lives.

Source: DNA India.com, "Narendra Modi government takes fight with Maoist to another level," October 18, 2014 <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-narendra-modi-government-takes-fight-with-maoist-to-another-level-2027119>

Making a huge departure from UPA government's policy in dealing with the Maoists, in the new Naxal policy that is being framed by the union home ministry, the BJP government has reserved the right to use "any element of its national power" against the CPI (Maoist).

The "hawkish" change enumerated in the general principles of the new policy says, "The state is duty bound to resolutely deal with the Maoist violence and reserves the right to use any element of its national power against the outfit as the situation warrants."

...Describing "any element of national power" a senior officials said, "any element obviously would mean whatever power comes under the command of the State - be it Army, Air Force or any other option but it would be requisitioned only if the situation warrants."...

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

By Cindy A. Hurst and Robert Mathers

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

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

Lieutenant Commander Cindy A. Hurst, USNR, is a Research Analyst for the Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Colonel Robert Mathers, USA, is the former Chief of the International Engagement Cell, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Training Mission–Afghanistan, and is now the Director of the Eurasian Security Studies Program at the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.



“The next Cobra Gold will bring some political fallout...”

OE Watch Commentary: Significant increases in the number and size of military exercises by forces in and from the Indo-Pacific Asia realm are routinely reported in Western media, but have yet to see widespread attention of other foreign or regional media. Historic exercises such as Cobra Gold in Thailand find room in The Bangkok Post, but with little editorializing. Ongoing US Navy exercises are more mentioned in sources such as The Star, yet find little coverage in the Malaysian or Indonesian media. Exchanges of units and short exercises with US Army Pacific forces are chronicled in US sources, but not easily found in the regional press. The clear impact from the US rebalancing to the Pacific is opaque in regional media and portents to continue as the US Army announces expansion of its Pacific Pathways Exercises in 2015, with no echo in regional media.

Somewhat surprisingly, the Malaysia-United States Amphibious Exercise (MALUS AMPHEX) 2014 was held in the same location that Philippine-based terrorists invaded and occupied more than a year ago. While this fact is not mentioned in the Malaysian news source above, it is reported in The Straits Times, which remains the source for record when it comes to regional reporting on combined military exercises. The Malaysian Insider offers some insight into a combined exercise in its English online news portal by reprinting the US Embassy news release on the Keris Strike annual exercise between US and Malaysian armed forces. This is the most common pattern of reporting found in the region: mainline regional media will simply republish Western source articles with little or no comment for context.

An exception to this pattern is Australian and New Zealand media, which openly report and editorialize on regional combined military exercises. However, they both focus primarily on their own armed forces. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)**

Source: The Bangkok Post, “Cobra Gold 2015 Set for February,” 21 October 2014 <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/security/438657/cobra-gold-2015-set-for-february>

Planning for next year’s US-Thai Cobra Gold war games is under way, with military exercises that will involve around 9,000 US troops and 6,000 Thais, new Supreme Commander Worapong Sanga-net confirmed Monday.

Set for February, Cobra Gold 2015 will also include active troops from Singapore, South Korea, Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia, US sources said.

Chinese troops will participate in the part of the games involving humanitarian and civilian assistance programmes.

The future of Cobra Gold, first held in 1982, was threatened briefly by the May 22 military coup. US- and Thailand-based rumour mongers tried to spread false reports in June that the US military was considering moving the exercise to Australia, a move that never was contemplated.

...Informal invitations to observe the exercises have gone out to the military attaches and diplomats of countries which previously have attended Cobra Gold — Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, China, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and the Netherlands, the sources said

Source: The Star Online, “Malaysia, US Armed Forces in Joint Exercise,” 25 August 2014 <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2014/08/25/Malaysia-US-armed-forces/>

KUALA LUMPUR: The Armed Forces of Malaysia and the United States are participating in a bilateral training exercise in Malaysia ... according to a statement issued by the US Embassy here.

... Malaysia-United States Amphibious Exercise (MALUS AMPHEX) 2014 had been planned over the span of several months and was designated to improve amphibious training, readiness and interoperability.

...The statement said the exercise would include service members from both the 7th and 22nd Royal Malay Regiments and US Marines and sailors from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group.

... a realistic and challenging exercise that brings service members closer and improves both nations’ ability to work bilaterally, which better prepares both nations to provide regional and global security,” the statement said.

“Is it appropriate to negotiate with the coup government? There is no guarantee for sincerity.”

OE Watch Commentary: As reported in the August edition of *OE Watch*, the government of Thailand had moved boldly towards talks with representatives of Muslim insurgent groups operating in the restive southern provinces of Thailand. The government of Malaysia had stepped up as a host and facilitator for such talks. These initiatives generated a strong wave of international praise and helped soften the image of the junta that had conducted the coup in Thailand earlier in May of this year. An article from Khaosode English (a Bangkok-based popular Thai-language newspaper) reports the current “conditions for the potential Malaysian-brokered peace talks.” The approach now is to require all concerned groups to agree to demands against the Thai government and submit them in concert. “It remains unclear whether insurgent groups in the south will agree to the ambitions [sic] conditions he [General Prayuth, Thailand’s current prime minister] and Prime Minister Najib have set.”

General Prayuth and the ruling junta have promised “to bring peace to the Muslim-dominated south within a year,” as detailed in an article in *The Irrawaddy* from last month. This seems to be increasingly problematic, as bombing and shootings continue causing injury and death in the three southernmost provinces. A think tank based in Sydney, Australia, has stated in their online daily journal, *The Interpreter*, that the Thai junta police is actually “supplying a large amount of arms to the Ministry of Interior for distribution to ‘civil volunteers’ in the country’s restive south.” The stated concern is the influx of weapons will arm ill-trained civilians and subsequently fall into the hands of the insurgents.

No popular regional sources are to be found that reflect optimism regarding a peaceful solution within a year or several years. The initial glow of international approval and junta aplomb has subsided. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)**

Source: KhaosodeEnglish, “Thai and Malaysian PMs Set Conditions for Peace Talks With Southern Rebels,” 2 December 2014 <http://www.khaosodenglish.com/detail.php?newsid=1417499500>

BANGKOK — Thai Prime Minister Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha and his counterpart in Malaysia have set conditions for potential Malaysian-brokered peace talks between Thai authorities and Muslim insurgents in Thailand’s southern border provinces.

The insurgent groups who have been launching deadly attacks on civilians and security forces in southern Thailand must first honour a ceasefire, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak told the press after his bilateral meeting with Thai PM Gen. Prayuth in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

In addition, all militant groups involved in the insurgency must be represented at the talks and unite around a shared set of demands, Najib said.

“In other words, all the parties must agree to a list of demands or requests that they should put forward to the Thai government and that would be the basis of starting the actual substantive negotiations with the Thai government,” he was quoted as saying by *The Star*.

Gen. Prayuth also stressed yesterday that the new round of peace talks will differ from the former government’s effort, which focused on only one of the rebel groups operating in what is known as Thailand’s ‘Deep South.’

...Gen. Prayuth has refused to provide a timeline for his administration’s talks, and it remains unclear whether insurgent groups in the south will agree to the ambitions conditions he and Prime Minister Najib have set.

Just yesterday, security officers found dozens of banners across the southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, that read: “Is it appropriate to negotiate with the coup government? There is no guarantee for sincerity.”

Source: *The Irrawaddy*, “Thai Junta Promises Peace ‘Within a Year’ in Insurgency-Hit South,” 4 November 2014 <http://www.irrawaddy.org/asia/thai-junta-promises-peace-within-year-insurgency-hit-south.html>

BANGKOK — Thailand’s military government vowed ... to bring peace to the Muslim-dominated south within a year, despite stalled peace talks aimed at ending an insurgency that has cost thousands of lives in the past decade.

Sporadic violence has killed more than 5,700 people in Thailand’s Muslim-majority provinces bordering Malaysia, where resistance to Buddhist rule has existed for decades and resurfaced violently in January 2004.

In the latest violence ..., one woman was killed and at least two injured in separate bomb attacks launched by suspected militants at three restaurants in Pattani province, police said.

“We are doing all that we can. We will try to bring peace within a year,” Defence Minister Prawit Wongsuwan told reporters.

(continued)

Continued: Thailand – Insurgency in the South: UPDATE

He blamed the attacks on insurgents retaliating for recent arrests by the authorities.

“The attacks happened because we managed to catch many people, including leaders, of groups involved in instigating acts of violence,” Prawit added.

The violence comes as Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha seeks to present an image of greater effectiveness in containing the insurgency, based in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces in Thailand’s so-called “Deep South”.

...Prayuth, who took power after the coup, has promised investigations into allegations of rights abuses by some troops. Rights groups say he has failed to act on that promise.

In August, a 14-year-old Muslim boy was shot dead by an army-trained volunteer unit in Narathiwat. A police investigation found a member of the unit planted a pistol in the boy’s hand after the shooting to make him appear to be an insurgent...

Source: The Interpreter, “No Peace, More Guns: Thai Junta Arms Civilians in Restive South,” 5 November 2014 <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2014/11/05/No-peace-more-guns-Thai-Junta-arms-civilians-in-restive-south.aspx?COLLCC=3909735976&>

Since seizing power in a coup in May, the former General turned PM, Prayuth Chan-Ocha, has been on a mission to stabilise the country and ‘return happiness to the people’ (the title of a song he penned earlier this year).

Yet while many of his moves have prompted wry smiles from Thailand watchers, ...

... the Army announced it is supplying a large amount of arms to the Ministry of Interior for distribution to ‘civil volunteers’ in the country’s restive south. These arms are not, as Thai PBS put it, ‘service pistols’. Rather, they are HK33 semi-automatic assault rifles (capable of full auto), 2700 of them.

The spokesperson for the Internal Operations Security Command noted that volunteers ‘need weapons for self-defence’. He added that many of the weapons had also gone to local Muslim villagers who have been targeted for moderate and pro-peace views.

After much Government talk of negotiating a peace deal in the country’s south this year, the move ... will likely escalate vigilantism and violence in what is Southeast Asia’s most deadly ongoing conflict.

...While the intent of much of the insurgency has been unwavering, their capability (while often gruesome) has remained limited...Will more arms simply fuel greater vigilantism, which some Buddhist monks have already called for?

... a researcher on the conflict, noted that most arms used by insurgents are seized from those killed in the insurgency. The influx of new assault weapons into the hands of those with little to no training may well be a boon for insurgents themselves.

The proliferation of arms to untrained civilians is quite simply dangerous policy. It is an abdication of responsibility by the army and undermines the job of security forces, who should be leading all such operations. This is a bad solution based on bad logic that will ultimately have deadly results.

“A Chinese vessel carrying bituminous coal from Siberia via the North Korean port city of Rajin arrived this morning in Pohang, South Korea. It is the first shipment under the Khasan-Rajin project that aims to establish trade routes among the two Koreas and Russia.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The past couple of months have seen a number of important developments in Russian-Korean relations, with both the North and South. As the excerpt from a South Korean editorial points out, “Choe Ryong-hae, North Korea’s second most powerful figure,” visited Moscow in November, meeting with President Putin and other high-level Kremlin officials. While specific details were not released, the meetings were presumably designed to improve bilateral relations, to include increased bilateral trade and investment.*

As evidence of this increased Russian involvement in the Korean peninsula, the excerpt describes an energy milestone, where for the first time Russian coal travelled by a new rail link into North Korea and was then transported by ship to the South. Over the past two decades there have been a number of proposals whereby Russian energy supplies would transit North Korea into the South. These plans have yet to be realized due to a lack of infrastructure and political obstacles. This relatively small coal shipment could be the precursor to much greater energy supplies for the Korean peninsula in the future.

The article makes reference to the “bottlenecked South Korean economy,” and how this new energy supply route from Russia through North Korea could provide access to energy, markets and economic growth. It also suggests that business interests and the need to expand the South Korean economy ought to take precedence over other considerations. Despite Western sanctions, South Korea will continue to openly trade with Russia because South Koreans see Russia as a potentially large business partner. This sentiment aligns with a popular Korean aphorism about neighbors: “To stop quarrelling, one should begin to bargain.”

End OE Watch Commentary (Kim)

Source: “Time To End The Sanctions,” JoongAng Daily Online, 28 November 2014. <http://joongangdaily.joins.com>

A Chinese vessel carrying bituminous coal from Siberia via the North Korean port city of Rajin arrived this morning in Pohang, South Korea. It is the first shipment under the Khasan-Rajin project that aims to establish trade routes among the two Koreas and Russia. The keystone of the project was construction of a 54-kilometer (33.5-mile) railroad from the Russian town of Khasan and the modernization of Rajin, North Korea’s free trade port.

Under the deal, North Korea and Russia set up a joint venture company in 2008 and recently completed railroad renovation and port modernization. South Korean companies are prohibited from direct investment in North Korea under the May 24, 2010, sanctions installed after the deadly attack on the Cheonan. Instead, they had to participate by buying Russian stakes in the joint venture....

...The Khasan-Rajin railroad can be connected with the Trans-Siberia Railway system. When it links up with the Trans-Korean Peninsula Railway, the gigantic rail would become a modern Silk Road linking Northeast Asia and Europe. Whether by land or sea, Rajin can shave as much as 40 percent off shipping costs compared with existing sea routes through Southeast Asia, the Indian Sea and the Suez Canal. If a Russian gas pipeline is built across the Korean Peninsula along with the transcontinental railway system, it would be a turning point for our economy.

The recent visit to Russia by Choe Ryong-hae, North Korea’s second most powerful figure, underscores Pyongyang’s shift toward Moscow. Russia recently offered \$25 billion to modernize 3,200 kilometers of North Korea’s railroads over the next 20 years in return for access to the North’s mineral resources. ...

...While the North offers the answer to the bottlenecked South Korean economy, we also need to consider the big picture and unification. We cannot advance northward without going through North Korea. The sanctions must first be removed to clear the way. Local companies must be able to jump on the bandwagon without limitations....

The Significance of Cold Weather Exercises to the People's Liberation Army

19 November 2014

“The main business of border defense troops is to manage and control the border areas, but our vision cannot be limited to the border.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The following article focuses on realistic combat training in China's Xinjiang province and could shed light on some of the country's security concerns and objectives. Most notably, the article explains that in the midst of a January 2014 training session in northern Xinjiang, the weather was not conducive to training. The temperatures had plummeted to -22 Fahrenheit, the wind was howling, and icy snow covered the ground. The inclement weather prompted officers and soldiers to take a day off and relax in the barracks. However, their rest was interrupted when they were ordered to respond to “a small group of enemy soldiers” launching “harassing attacks” against their area. The officers and soldiers immediately obeyed the order and rushed to the site of the drill. However, the extremely frigid weather caused their communications and command equipment to break down, rendering them blind.*

During the post-drill wrap-up meeting, several officers and soldiers complained, saying that “it is unlikely that the enemy will launch attacks in such weather.” The regimental leaders pointed out, “We cannot choose the weather to go to war. We must be able to win in all kinds of weather.” The article goes on to explain since then officers and soldiers have been training in sandstorms and blizzards, incorporating multiple scenarios ranging from ambush to frigid temperatures, high altitudes, and in “the depth of the night.” This, according to the article, has made the troops twice as capable, operating under complex weather conditions, while also giving them an ever-improving awareness of all-weather operations. With past wars embedded in their minds, the Chinese have been moving forward using these experiences as lessons learned.

China has a history of suffering during its battles in frigid weather. For example, during the Korean War (1950-1953) China suffered heavy casualties, which were compounded by vicious, cold weather. The Chinese troops were simply not prepared logistically to fight under these circumstances. During the 1962 Sino-Indian War soldiers from both sides lost their lives due to the extremely harsh weather conditions. The failure of communications, command and control equipment are indicative that the Chinese need to improve their equipment for cold weather operations.

*Tibet and Xinjiang, located in the Western part of China, consist of rugged mountainous terrain with extreme weather. These areas are found along the country's borders. It is also worth noting that China has been expanding its global presence and, as the article states, its “vision cannot be limited to the border.” In particular, over the past several years, drawn mostly by extensive natural resources, China has been staking out claims in the Arctic. With the growing international interest in that region, China could be buffing itself up in case it ever needs to jump into action to defend its claims. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Source: Qian Xiaohu, “大漠“突围” Breaking Siege in the Great Desert – A Documentary on Combat Realistic training Conducted by a Border Defense Regiment of the Inner Mongolia Military District,” Jiefangjun Bao, November 19, 2014, <http://www.81.cn/jfjbmap/content/2014-11/19/content_93396.htm>.

Breaking Siege in the Great Desert

“In reality, it is unlikely that the enemy will launch attacks in such weather.”
“The word unlikely does not mean zero likelihood.” The regimental leader said categorically: “We cannot choose the weather to go to war. We must be able to win in all kinds of weather.”

... officers and soldiers have been seen training amid sandstorms and blizzards; multiple subjects, such as concealing for ambush and firing, took place frequently under frigid conditions at high altitudes and in the depth of the night... Now, the officers and soldiers not only command twice as good capabilities for operations under complex weather conditions but also have ever-improving awareness of all-weather operations.

They set their eyes on beyond the border.

“The main business of border defense troops is to manage and control the border areas, but our vision cannot be limited to the border.” During the interview, the words of the regimental leader imprinted on the minds of us reporters. He told us, their objective is to manage the border areas in peacetime, respond to emergencies, and stand ready to fight in times of war.

China: Using Joint Cooperation in Research and Development to “Rebalance the World”

7 December 2014

“Cooperation among emerging market countries has already become an important factor that influences sustained, stable development of the global economy. In the future it surely will propel the international balance of forces in the direction of becoming more balanced.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The following article is interesting in that, using China’s relationship with Brazil as an example, it talks about China’s growing push for cooperation in research and technology. On 7 December China launched its 200th “Long March rocket family,” sending into space the CBERS-4 satellite, which it jointly developed with Brazil. The CBERS-4 is the fifth satellite developed in the Chinese-Brazilian Earth Resource Satellite (CBERS) program, which began in 1988. The purpose of the ongoing project has been to develop a civilian remote-sensing satellite.*

According to the author, the two countries’ efforts have “blazed a new path and set up an example for emerging market countries to further deepen cooperation and expand the space for cooperation.” China, being the second, and Brazil the seventh largest economies in the world, the author believes that the influence of such cooperation has “transcended the bilateral realm and distinctly showed its strategic nature and overall importance.”

Furthermore, under the current economic slowdown, it is even more important that emerging markets cooperate with one another to raise their competitiveness. “Strengthening cooperation on scientific and technological innovation undoubtedly is an important thrust for achieving this objective.”

Developing countries are able to draw upon each other’s strengths and build themselves up in areas in which they would otherwise be weak. This allows them to advance even more quickly than they would, were they working independently.

The author points out that “emerging market countries already came to a profound understanding of the important role of scientific and technological cooperation.” This past February, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, otherwise known as the BRICS nations, held their first ministerial meeting

Source: “China to Set Up Anti-Terror Intelligence Gathering Center,” Xinhuanet, October 27, 2014, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-10/27/c_133745672.htm

Scientific, Technological Innovation Helps Cooperation Among Emerging Market Countries

Strengthening cooperation on scientific and technological innovation is one of the key elements in how the cooperation between emerging market countries will go forward and in whether or not the potential for cooperation can be expanded and the level of cooperation be raised.

...

The China-Brazil earth resources satellite cooperation project set a successful precedent of cooperation carried out between developing countries in the space field that involves high-end science and technology, gave expression to the abundant potential for cooperation on scientific and technological innovation among emerging market countries, and blazed a new path and set up an example for emerging market countries to further deepen cooperation and expand the space for cooperation.

... The influence produced by the scope and level of Sino-Brazilian cooperation has already transcended the bilateral realm and distinctly showed its strategic nature and overall importance.

...

Under the dual impact of global economic sluggishness and their own internal structural transformation, emerging market countries have now generally entered a correction period, with their economic growth rates starting to slow down. Furthermore, a deficiency of impetus is arising in economic and trade cooperation among emerging market countries and the imbalance problems in their cooperation over the past period of time start to show distinctly. Cooperation among emerging market countries is met with a barrier. To stride over this barrier, the various countries are required to dig deep into their potential for economic development and raise their competitiveness in the light of specific national conditions and through reforms and adjustments. Strengthening cooperation on scientific and technological innovation undoubtedly is an important thrust for achieving this objective.

...

Cooperation among emerging market countries has already become an important factor that influences sustained, stable development of the global economy. In the future it surely will propel the international balance of forces in the direction of becoming more balanced and have a far-reaching impact on promoting world prosperity and stability.

(continued)

Continued: China: Using Joint Cooperation in Research and Development to “Rebalance the World”

on science, technology, and innovation in Cape Town. Together they “set the major fields of cooperation under the BRICS framework for scientific and technological innovation.”

*Perhaps most compelling are the author’s final words, when he explains that by having developing nations increase their cooperation in research and development, “in the future it surely will propel the international balance of forces in the direction of becoming more balanced and have a far-reaching impact on promoting world prosperity and stability.” This is likely a continuation of the desire to build an alternate global economy, which could rival the current system. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Turkey and China: Unlikely Strategic Partners

By Ms. Karen Kaya

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



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

Xi Jinping Stresses Military Loyalty in Light of CMC Corruption

1 November 2014

“With reference to the Gutian location, authors Cao and Li noted the following: “Xi came to the hall where Mao Zedong delivered the political report way back then, gazed at the combatant slogans on the pillars, and viewed the traces of charcoal fire used by the congress representatives to keep warm at that time...” “Chairman Mao Memorial Garden on the north side of the site was built against the hill and looked solemn. Xi Jinping wore a serious look while ascending the 151-flight staircase, respectfully laid a floral basket at Mao Zedong statue, personally smoothed out the ribbons on the floral basket, led the people to bow three times to Mao Zedong statue, paid homage to the statue...””

OE Watch Commentary: Chinese President Xi Jinping attended and spoke at the recent meeting of the All-Army Political Work Conference in Gutian. His presence at the meeting takes on added importance due to the recent arrests of high-ranking generals in the People’s Liberation Army and Communist Party of China (CPC).

Xi’s presence appeared to be an attempt to offset the recent house arrest for corruption of Xu Caihou and Gu Jinshan, two former members of the Central Military Commission under former President Hu Jintao. Xi mentioned Xu by name. Of added interest is that, when telling the army to follow the guidance of Marx, Mao, Deng Xiaoping and the “Three Represents” (the slogan of former President Hu), China watchers will want to know why Xi failed to mention Jiang Zemin, although the latter has been in the press often in the past months (a military political report on Xi’s speech in December mentioned Jiang). Earlier in the year Zhou Yongkang, a former member of the Standing Politburo of China under Hu, had also been placed under house arrest; he has now been formally arrested and charged with crimes.

What this shows is the extent of high-level corruption in the CPC. Xi knows that he must maintain the loyalty of the military if he hopes to remain in power, and his presence at this location, one he chose himself, is indicative of the measures the upper crust of China’s political hierarchy are taking to ensure Party loyalty. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Source: Cao Zhi and Li Xuanliang, “All-Army Political Work Conference Held in Gutian; Xi Jinping Attends Meeting, Delivers Important Speech...,” Xinhua Domestic Service, 1 November 2014.

Xi Jinping emphasized that the contemporary theme of the army’s political work is to closely center on realizing the Chinese dream of the Chinese nation’s great rejuvenation and provide a strong political guarantee for realizing the party’s goal of strengthening army under the new situation. The whole army must follow the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thinking of the “Three Represents,” and the scientific development concept; fully implement the party central committee’s plans and requirements for running the country by law and running the party with rigor; implement the principle of running the army by law and with rigor; closely center on the contemporary theme of our army’s political work; strengthen and improve our army’s political work under the new situation; and fully develop the role of political work as the lifeline for strengthening the army and invigorating the military.

Xi Jinping dissected and analyzed 10 outstanding problems in army units, especially in leading cadres’ ideology, politics, and work style. Xi Jinping said these problems are attributed to many reasons, the most fundamental of which are still the problems in ideals and beliefs, principle of party spirit, revolutionary spirit, organizational discipline, ideology, work style, and other aspects; we should reflect on the problems from the perspective of political work; earnestly sum up the lessons such as insufficient education of the instructors themselves, excessive leniency and softness in managing the leading cadres, failure to effectively develop the supervision system’s functions, and loopholes in developing rules and regulations...

At present the most important thing is to erect four fundamental things: We should firmly erect the ideals and beliefs throughout the army; ...bolster the ideals and beliefs of the officers and men as the strategic project for solidifying the foundation as well as coalescing the spirit and energy; master the characteristics and law of forging the army spirit and building character under the new situation; and focus on cultivating a new generation of revolutionary servicemen with souls, skills, courage, and virtues.

Xi Jinping said, to strengthen and improve our army’s political work under the new situation, we should now focus on the following five areas: First, focus on firmly forging the army spirit... Second, focus on effectively managing senior and middle-ranking cadres... Third, focus on improving the work style and struggling against corruption... Fourth, focus on nurturing the combatant spirit...

China's Manufacturing Automation: Driven by High Technology Necessity

18 November 2014

OE Watch Commentary: At 36,000 industrial robots sold in 2013 accounting for 20% of global robot sales that year, China has become the largest market for such advanced machinery. In the first article the Chinese Academy of Sciences researcher states this trend is driven by rising labor costs. He goes on to say that a consequence is a boost to “the intelligent transition of the manufacturing industry” that comes from a labor-cost-driven move to a greater role of automation in Chinese industry.

In the second article Chinese robot sales are said to have grown at a 36% annualized rate over the six-year period 2008-2013, and automotive customers have accounted for the majority of these sales. This is because it is not possible to mass produce cars to a modern standard of performance and safety without the heavy use of automated manufacturing

The Chinese Academy of Sciences researcher is undoubtedly correct that robot sales in China are driven in large part by the roughly 14% annual increases in the average cost of Chinese labor over the past decade. Starting from a very low base in the 1990s, Chinese industrial labor costs are now reaching significant levels relative to international competitors, with no foreseeable end to similar increases in the coming decade. Chinese industrial labor is now approximately 20% as expensive as average U.S. industrial labor costs (\$4/hour versus \$18/hour). That may seem like a large gap, but it is in large part a reflection of the relative productivity of the two national labor pools, as Chinese labor remains significantly less productive than the average labor productivity in developed country.

Yet, China seeks to produce the same types of goods as developed country competitors and strives to attain a similar quality and functionality of the high technology goods it produces. How to achieve that end with a productively handicapped labor force? The answer for an increasing number of state-owned and private Chinese manufacturers is to employ robots and automation in general. The response is driven, in part, by rising labor costs, but the greater need is to make goods that cannot be made without the regularity and precision of automated manufacturing techniques and equipment.

Buying high technology robots and factory automation gear from overseas suppliers has been the primary means by which China realizes the vast majority of its automation goals, but that is changing. The country's manufacturers are turning to direct acquisition of the technology producers. Overall, natural resources still constitute a majority by value of overseas Chinese acquisitions, but manufacturers are increasingly turning from securing overseas raw material inputs to acquiring high technology firms in developed countries for processing equipment inputs. The third article discusses this shift in emphasis from the perspective of automation hardware and software, which form an increasingly important component of both high technology manufacturing and Chinese overseas acquisitions. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zandoli)**

Source: “China to Mass Produce Industrial Robots,” Beijing Review, 3 September 2014. http://www.bjreview.com/science/txt/2014-09/03/content_638474.htm.

China to Mass Produce Industrial Robots

China became the world's largest industrial robot market in 2013 with 37,000 industrial robots sold in the country, accounting for 20 percent of the global market. Rising labor costs and aging population have prompted the application of industrial robots in China, which at the same time boosts the intelligent transition of the manufacturing industry, said Ding Han, an academician with the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Source: “Robots in China: The Bot Connection,” Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business, 11 November 2014. <http://knowledge.ckgsb.edu.cn/2014/11/11/technology/robots-in-china-the-bot-connection/>.

Robots in China: The Bot Connection

China's status as the fastest-growing market for industrial robotics means that relatively virgin robot territory could be set for some serious growth. Robot sales grew 36% on average per year from 2008 to 2013, according to the IFR report, with the auto sector retaining its role as the main driver of the automation boom with 60% of all auto production depending on robotics.

Source: “Chinese Outbound Investment in Technology: Bits, Bytes, and All Things Tech,” Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business, 18 November 2014, <http://knowledge.ckgsb.edu.cn/2014/11/18/finance-and-investment/bits-bytes-things-tech-chinese-outbound-investment-technology/>.

Chinese Outbound Investment in Technology: Bits, Bytes, and All Things Tech

In 2014, for instance, Lenovo bought IBM's low-end server business for a sum of \$2.3 billion. A few months later, it bought Motorola Mobility from Google for \$2.92 billion, making this China's largest ever tech deal. The deal also helped Lenovo become the world's third-largest smartphone maker, surpassing Xiaomi, which, ironically, had just jumped into the Top 3 list earlier on that same day.

China Frustrated with Turkey over Uighur Foreign Fighters and Broken Promises

OE Watch Commentary: A Chinese-language article featured on the website of Huanqiu Shibao on 12 December discussed a tweet from Syria that showed a photo of a Chinese militant about to carry out a suicide car bombing. Other social media reports from Syria and Iraq have reported arrests of Han (presumably converts to Islam) and Hui Chinese, as well as Chinese Uighurs, in Syria. The Pakistan-based Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), which is closely affiliated with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), has also published online magazines encouraging fighters to travel to Syria and wage jihad there, as well as claiming responsibility for attacks carried out on Chinese soil. In total, China says 300 of its citizens, mostly Uighurs, are actively fighting in Syria and Iraq for the Islamic State and other jihadist groups.

The Huanqiu Shibao article was notable, however, for blaming Turkey for having an ambiguous policy towards the jihadists and allowing the country to serve as a transit hub for militants. Chinese analyses previously have refrained from criticizing Turkey. It is unclear whether this criticism is related solely to China's concerns about its citizens transiting Turkey or if there are possibly other unmentioned issues. For example, Turkey has reportedly offered to take as refugees several hundred Uighurs who fled China and were arrested without proper documentation on the Thai-Malay border over the course of several months in 2014. China wanted the Uighurs to be repatriated. In addition, Turkey decided in September 2013 to buy long-range and antimissile defense systems from a Chinese company on the US sanctions list for violating the embargo on Iran, but in September 2014 Turkey announced that it was rethinking this decision in favor of a deal with France.

Thus, the Chinese criticisms and frustrations about Turkey, as exemplified in the Huanqiu Shibao article, likely relate not only to China's concerns about its citizens transiting Turkey, but also to its perception that Turkey is again looking west after initially looking east towards China for military support. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**



The Uighur-led Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) and other Central Asian jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq, such as the Uzbek-led Imam Bukhari Battalion, have increasingly shown their fighters in videos.

Source: http://centralasiaonline.com/en_GB/articles/caii/features/main/2014/06/12/feature-01

Source: "Turkey's Ambiguous Policies Help Terrorists Join IS Jihadist Group" huanqiu.com, 12 December 2014.

Turkey's ambiguous policies help terrorists join IS jihadist group

According to a senior security official from the Kurdish region of Iraq, terrorists from the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a terrorist organization that is also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), have travelled to Syria via southeastern Turkey's Sanliurfa Province to join the Islamic State jihadist group.

The official shared a video produced by the Islamic State, which dates from October 17, with the Global Times. The video subtitles claim the teenager shown in the video was "a Chinese brother before he did a martyrdom operation (suicide bomb attack) in the town of Suleiman."

"The fact that these extremists can easily enter Turkey and later travel to Syria and Iraq to join IS is a direct consequence of the Turkish government's ambiguous policies," a source familiar with China's anti-terrorism operations, told the Global Times.

According to information from various sources, including security officers from Iraq's Kurdish region, Syria and Lebanon, around 300 Chinese extremists are fighting with IS in Iraq and Syria.

“...since 2000 there has been a consistent reduction of staff of the armed forces: from 80,000 to the current 48,000”

OE Watch Commentary: Since the Central Asian states became independent in 1991, military and security analysts have usually assessed Uzbekistan as having the strongest armed forces in the region. The accompanying article repeats this overall assessment, but also examines how Uzbekistan's armed forces might not be as strong as many have thought. The author of the article cites a recent report by the Global Firepower Index that rated Uzbekistan's Armed Forces as being the strongest in the region, and he points out how this system of ranking world militaries does not consider several important factors. When Uzbekistan became independent, it inherited a significant inventory of equipment and a sizeable force and a few military educational facilities, as Tashkent had been the headquarters of the Soviet Union's Turkestan Military District. The author mentions how equipment in the country's ground forces has undergone some repairs and modernization, but he states that there has been an overall decline of equipment and personnel through mismanagement. It should be noted that there are very few reports coming out of Uzbekistan to verify or refute the author's claim.

The reports that have emerged in the past few years focus on how the government made some upgrades to transport and attack helicopters. The author notes a deal that had been set to take place with Uzbekistan purchasing transport helicopters from Airbus, but the German government blocked the deal. While this is a blow to the country's defense procurement, it is an indication of what the government is focused on. Instead of focusing on repairing or upgrading its forces in the Ministry of Defense (MoD), the government of Uzbekistan has instead put effort toward strengthening internal security forces, such as those in the Interior Ministry and National Security Committee (SNB). Additionally, there are still likely to be agreements between Uzbekistan and Russian defense firms on repairing and upgrading equipment. As a result of this, the author believes that the military of Kazakhstan is now on the same level as that of its neighbor. Considering Kazakhstan's investments into developing its own Armed Forces, this might be the case, though the impact this would have on relations between the two or with other governments in the region is less clear. Despite tension or rhetoric among any of the governments of the region, including Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, instances of armed conflict between regional government forces have been sporadic, and, when they have taken place, they typically involved the Border Guards services. Ultimately, Uzbekistan is likely to maintain strong armed forces (within the MoD), particularly compared to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, or Turkmenistan, but its place in the region may not be as strong as once thought. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: Nersisyan, Leonid. “Вооружённые силы Узбекистана: первые в регионе, несмотря на коррупцию” (The Armed Forces of Uzbekistan: first in the region, despite the corruption), Regnum, 3 December 2014. <http://www.regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/uzbek/1872764.html>

The Armed Forces of Uzbekistan: first in the region, despite the corruption

In the Global Firepower Index ranking (of world military power) the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan took 48th place out of 106 countries...these ratings not complete and are, in fact, a summary of different indicators: the number of personnel, number of different types of military equipment, finances, etc. Other important factors like the level of professionalism of enlisted and officers, state of military equipment, and the morale of the service members are not considered...

...since 2000 there has been a consistent reduction of staff of the armed forces: from 80,000 to the current 48,000...Almost all of this equipment with the ground forces is Soviet...it has undergone repairs and modernization...The Air Force is well equipped, but there is no information about how many aircraft are “on the books” and those that can fly...Allegedly, Airbus Helicopters signed a contract worth around 180 million Euros in 2013 to provide six Cougar transport helicopters and ten Fennec multipurpose helicopters. However, the deal was blocked by Germany...Combat experience is almost non-existent and military exercises are not often carried out.

The Armed Forces of Uzbekistan are one of the strongest in Central Asia, however, a lack of development and practically a complete stagnation have led to the military of Kazakhstan being able to contend with the primacy of Uzbekistan in the region... Despite a relatively small size, low salaries, and a large budget, there is an absence of procurement of new equipment...This is evidence of widespread corruption and misuse of funds...

Incidents of Violence on Kyrgyzstan's Borders: A Year in Review

27 November 2014

“As compared with 2013 the total number of incidents increased a little; however, there were three times less conflicts on the border with Uzbekistan and with Tajikistan, it almost doubled...”

OE Watch Commentary: *The past year has been arguably one of the most challenging for Kyrgyzstan's Border Guards service, and, as the accompanying article discusses, there were several factors contributing to this. Most of the problems notably come from several incidents of violence, all of which took place after the service went through three commanders in 2013. Incidents of violence on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border gained the most attention (see: October 2014 OE Watch, “The Role of Infrastructure in Violent Border Incidents”), but the article notes that there was only a small increase in the total number of incidents from the year before and the number of incidents on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border actually decreased. The article does not provide a description of what it means by incident, though the Kyrgyz Border Guards mention some of the main causes of them, including the lack of clear borders and the smuggling of goods. This has been repeatedly stated as the reason for incidents, but the fact that they mention an “international” document outlining borders, in addition to some comments from the head of the Kyrgyz Drug Control Agency (GSKN) at a recent conference, could be a sign of another approach to solving border problems.*

Tajik government officials have been in contact with their counterparts in Moscow to obtain a copy of Soviet-era maps to assist in negotiations with Kyrgyzstan to complete the border demarcation. Not long after this article was published the Kyrgyz government also requested a copy of archived maps from Russia, but the two sides have not been able to reach an agreement on which map to use. Maps were drawn up over a decade before the Second World War and in the late 1950s; Tajikistan refers to the former, while Kyrgyzstan cites the latter. This could be the closest thing to an international regulatory document the article mentions, since the various organizations that work to develop border security in the region do not put forth effort toward border demarcation.

*Another important issue brought up in the article as a cause of incidents is the smuggling of various items across the border. Narcotics are high on the list of smuggled contraband that the Kyrgyz Border Guards want to curb, but the list of items confiscated at the border also includes weapons, cigarettes, and consumer goods. The comments by the head of the GSKN at the roundtable discussion are interesting to note, because there has been some acknowledgement in the past that attempts to curb smuggling have created additional problems among those who rely on it to make a living. His comments do not necessarily mean that the Border Guards are going to allow smuggling to take place in some capacity, but the leadership might be thinking that the situation is more complex than they originally thought. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

Source: Ivanshchenko, Yekaterina. “Кыргызстан: Границы как источник проблем и конфликтов” (Kyrgyzstan: the borders are the source of problems and conflicts), Fergana News, 27 November 2014. <http://www.fergananews.com/articles/8323>

Kyrgyzstan: the borders are the source of problems and conflicts

On November 15 the Border Guard service of Kyrgyzstan summarized 10 months of 2014; during this time 252 border violators were arrested and 40 incidents took place. Of these, 32 were on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border, 5 on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, 2 on the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border, and one on the border with China...As compared with 2013 the total number of incidents increased a little; however, there were three times less conflicts on the border with Uzbekistan and with Tajikistan, it almost doubled...

According to the border guards, the main causes of border incidents are:

- The lack of an international regulatory document outlining the lines of the state borders...
- Attempts to smuggle contraband goods across borders, bypassing checkpoints
- Among residents of border areas, lack of ethics and knowledge about the border and reluctance to understand legal issues of borders

...During the 10 months of 2014 border guards confiscated contraband worth 5 million Som (over \$86,000), seized 114kg of narcotics, 10 firearms, 164 knives, and 62 rounds of ammunition...on January 19 at the Leilek border detachment (Batken Province) consumer goods were seized: clothing, medicines, perfumes, and electric heaters...on March 18 some Kyrgyz attempted to smuggle more than 5,000 cartons of Marlboro cigarettes into Tajikistan...

The border situation was discussed by experts at a roundtable, “Is Kyrgyzstan capable of defending its borders?,” which took place on November 26 in Bishkek...the event raised the question of drug trafficking. The head of Government Drug Control Agency, Timur Isakov, said that “The UN has recommendations which this country is trying to achieve, that if tension with drugs is not decreased, then at least stabilized.”

“If the Central Asians were at first used only as ordinary soldiers and junior commanders, then in the summer of this year the situation abruptly changed.”

OE Watch Commentary: Most discussions of security in Central Asia in recent years have focused on a possible threat coming from Afghanistan, but, as the accompanying articles show, there could be a shift in this perspective as Central Asians turn up for fighting with the Islamic State (IS). The first article is written by a Russian academic as a special piece for Asia-Plus and reflects some of the current thinking in Central Asia about the IS as a threat and what it means for the region. There are a few things to consider from both articles that help understand how those in the region see the IS. There are significant numbers of Central Asians who travel outside the region; most are looking for work, but there are exceptions. A young man from Tajikistan who was recently killed in Syria had dual Tajik and Russian citizenship, often traveled between the two countries, and apparently went to fight with the IS because of contacts he had made in Russia. With a couple hundred thousand people from Central Asia working or traveling abroad at any given time during the year, there is the potential that some of them could be influenced into joining the IS.

While there have been documented cases of Central Asians fighting with the IS, the actual number is difficult to determine. The author offers numbers from each of the countries that likely came from official sources. It is possible that the numbers are accurate if officials have conducted interviews with family members who have lost contact with an individual believed to be involved with the IS; however, it is worth remembering that a video from several months ago of Kazakhs in Syria claimed there were 50 people from Kazakhstan, when only a few could be verified on camera. Regardless of how many Central Asians are in the IS, the first article mentions how they are reportedly gaining combat experience and, in some cases, moving into leadership positions. There have always been concerns that Central Asians who have been involved with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Afghanistan or Pakistan would return to the region, though there has been no confirmation of this taking place.

The second article discusses a recent video released by the Islamic State (IS) that included

Source: Evstratov, Anton. “Ждать ли ‘Исламское государство’ в Средней Азии?” (Will there be an “Islamic state” in Central Asia?), Asia-Plus, 22 November 2014. <http://news.tj/ru/news/zhdai-li-islamskoe-gosudarstvo-v-srednei-azii>

Will there be an “Islamic state” in Central Asia?

With remarkable success the “Islamic state” has had a huge effect on almost the entire Muslim world...At the moment there are no fewer than 400 citizens of Kazakhstan, around 300 Tajiks and Kyrgyz, and a couple hundred Turkmen and Uzbeks. If the Central Asians were at first used only as ordinary soldiers and junior commanders, then in the summer of this year the situation abruptly changed.

...at the end of October there were reports of victories of Uzbek fighters under the command of someone called Abu Zubair al-Uzbeki in Iraq...despite the fact that the SNB of Uzbekistan were quick to refute this information, it is obvious that there are more contingents from Central Asia in IS and there is a growing influence of Central Asian leaders in the organization...

...Central Asian countries are not able to deal with Islamists on their...Russia appears to be the only real opportunity for the Central Asian republics to be rescued...Russian armed forces have repeatedly carried out joint military exercises, practicing different scenarios. Even the possibility of basic military supplies from Russia to the armies of Central Asia is much more feasible than from elsewhere...

Source: Evstratov, Anton. “Ждать ли ‘Исламское государство’ в Средней Азии?” (Will there be an “Islamic state” in Central Asia?), Asia-Plus, 22 November 2014. <http://news.tj/ru/news/zhdai-li-islamskoe-gosudarstvo-v-srednei-azii>

The material of Kloop.kg on “child-jihadists” has been passed on to the general prosecutor’s office

Kyrgyzstan’s Interior Ministry has passed material to the general prosecutor’s about Kazakh “child jihadists” training in an “Islamic State” camp...On November 25 the Interior Ministry posted a press release on its website that referenced the children of the Islamic State. This took place after Kazakh authorities made a request to the editors of Kloop to remove the published material about children being trained in the organization’s camp...

The Interior Ministry cites the laws of Kyrgyzstan against terrorism, which states that a call for terrorist activity or public justification of terrorism can result in criminal liability. It is unclear if the Interior Ministry said Kloop’s material contains this...

...(video) material of the children from Kazakhstan in the IS training camp was published on November 24 on Kloop. The video has (Kazakh) children learning Arabic and how to handle weapons...Reaction from Kazakh authorities came on the same

(continued)

Continued: What the Islamic State means for Central Asia

*Kazakh children handling weapons; the children could have been brought to Syria when their parents joined the IS and might now be orphans. This has caused alarm in Kazakhstan and across the region, and caused problems for the news site Kloop (in Kyrgyzstan), which could be facing criminal charges for posting the video. Kloop told its readers in an 11 December article that it could be blocked in Kyrgyzstan. While Kazakhstan blocked Kloop from its own internet service providers, a couple of news sources in Kazakhstan have reported on the video with what appears to be no restrictions, though they did not provide a link to the video. The cofounder and editor of Kloop has defended posting the video, claiming that the site only linked to it as it appeared in the Daily Mail in the UK and that people in Kyrgyzstan (or across the region) can access the material through other sites. In any case, Central Asian governments are now starting to see the IS as a threat on a level with groups in Afghanistan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

day...they referred to the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 and Kazakhstan's legislation to combat terrorism...After declining to remove it, Kazakh authorities have blocked Kloop.kg on its territory – demonstrated by comments of Kazakhs who cannot access the site and data from online services...

A Central Asian Perspective of Security in Afghanistan

By Matthew Stein

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

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

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



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

Islamic State Features Kazakh Kids in Syria

30 September 2014

“The reason they are training children is the same reason the like of Hamas have been training children for the past 20 years. It is to indoctrinate them and create the next generation of fighter.”

OE Watch Commentary: In 2013 the Kazakh government was shocked when militants in Syria released a video of more than 100 Kazakh men, women and children engaging in “family jihad.” When Kazakhstani analysts traced the profile of the young men in the video after families recognized them on the news and reported them to authorities, they saw that there was nothing particularly unique about the young men who said they migrated (hijra) to Syria. While some of the men were jobless in Kazakhstan, few of them expressed grievances against the Kazakhstani state, except that it was not implementing sharia law. The analysts concluded that the Kazakh migrants adopted jihadist ideology on the Internet or through extremist imams in Kazakhstan or while laboring in Russia or studying in Pakistan, Egypt, and Turkey. They then traveled to Syria in search of paradise with their wives and children rather than launching a war against Kazakhstan.

On 22 November the UK-based tabloid, Daily Mail, released another shocking video of Kazakh children with the Islamic State in Syria that it had received from a Islamic State media source, Al Hayat. This new video features boys training in gunfire and studying Islam in a classroom in Syria. One boy, Abdullah, promised in the Kazakh language that he will grow up and kill the infidels. According to government estimates, up to 80% of Kazakh men who went to Syria may have been killed there, which means it is likely many Kazakh children like Abdullah are orphans. The Kazakh foreign fighters, unlike experienced Chechen or Libyan militants, are expendable as suicide bombers for the Islamic State; while they may have little value on the battlefield, they have more propaganda value as martyrs who can show the global footprint of the Islamic State’s self-declared Caliphate.

Kazakhstani officials expect this video of Kazakh children will backfire against the Islamic State because of the way it shows the militants brainwashing children into a violent ideology. However, the government has nonetheless asked all news agencies, both at



The Kazakh boy, Abdullah, was also featured on the back cover of the 5th edition of Islamic State’s online magazine Dabiq. source: <http://www.rferl.org/content/kazakhstan-islamic-state-recruitment-children-syria/26709628.html>

Source: “ISIS Release Shocking New Video of Child Soldiers from Kazakhstan Being Trained with AK47s,” Daily Mail.co.uk, 22 November 2014.

ISIS release shocking new video of child soldiers from Kazakhstan being trained with AK47s

A new ISIS propaganda video has emerged on social media showing the indoctrination and training of dozens of child soldiers from Kazakhstan. Entitled ‘Race Towards Good’, the video was produced by the terror group’s main media branch, Al Hayat Media Center.

The propaganda video shows a group of new adult ISIS recruits from Kazakhstan training in an assault courses and receiving specialist sniper training. Ranging in age, the adults are also shown in a classroom being taught about the firing range for different sniper rifles, including weapons from the United States.

The young boys are shown catching the bus to their religious school. One of the boys mimics pointing a rifle towards the camera whilst others recite ISIS slogans. The boys are then shown being taught the ISIS radical interpretation of Sharia’h law in a classroom. A Kazakh cleric is shown sitting in the classroom, where he tells the camera what it means to be a Kazakh in the Islamic State. ‘We spent our childhood far away from this blessing. We were raised on the methodology of atheism, and Allah’s refuge is sought.’ He goes on to denounce the West, claiming ‘the kuffar poisoned our minds.’

One of the Kazakh children, who gives his name as Abdullah, is asked in an interview what he is doing. The boy replies: ‘I’m training in a camp.’ When quizzed about what he will do in the future, Abdullah chillingly declares with a smile: ‘I will be the one who slaughters you, O kuffar (non-believer). I will be a mujahid, insha’allah (God willing.)’

(continued)

Continued: Islamic State Features Kazakh Kids in Syria

home and abroad, to block the Daily Mail's article to prevent further dissemination of the video. The government believes the video is a form of psychological warfare and that only a brief clip of the video should be shown with analysis of the video's content. Thus far, however, it has been difficult for Kazakhstan to win UK cooperation on this issue, let alone from its neighbor, Kyrgyzstan, whose media site, kloop.kg, also released the video.

End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)

The boy is then shown as part of the Kazakh boys brigade sitting as a group. One of the older boys leads a prayer before proclaiming the group's message: 'We're going to kill you, O kuffar. Insha'allah we'll slaughter you.'

It is thought that at least 300 Kazakh nationals have travelled to Syria and joined Islamic State, according to the National Security Committee of Kazakhstan.

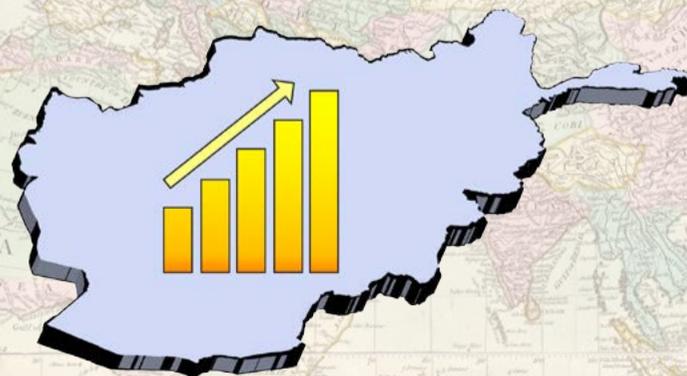
Measuring Progress in Reconstructing Afghanistan

By Christiaan Davids, Sebastiaan Rietjens
& Joseph Soeters

Netherlands National Defence Academy

“Nation building and its supporting policy development should no longer occur without a careful cost-benefit analysis.”

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/International.html>



Combat Robot Companies Enter the Table of Organization and Equipment

“In accordance with a decision of the Defense Ministry leadership, separate combat robot companies are being established in each military district and fleet,”

- Oleg Martyanov, Military-Industrial Commission (VPK) Collegium Member

OE Watch Commentary: Russia has made great strides in the last several years to introduce UAV technologies to the Russian Armed Forces and its other militarized security services. In parallel with UAV development, Russia has also shown an interest in land and naval robotic technologies.

Russian UAV, and presumably robotic, technologies have lagged significantly behind the West. Russian UAVs have no armaments and are primarily used for reconnaissance, artillery spotting, and signal retransmission, and at the current stage of development these new technologies either are not significantly developed or are not yet trusted for use as weapon platforms. The accompanying articles discuss the Russian military's plan to further develop land-based robotic technologies by adding a combat robot company to each of Russia's four military districts and four fleets. The term "combat robot companies" is something of a misnomer, as most references to these assets involve using them in a "guard" capacity, such as for military installations and mobile strategic nuclear missile systems, or for explosive-ordnance-disposal-related tasks. It is likely that these "combat robot companies" will not be fielded in any type of combat role in the foreseeable future, and are likely intended to be used solely for field-testing new technologies. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: "Russian Armed Forces Are Establishing Authorized Combat Robot Companies," Interfax Online, 7 November 2014, <<http://lenta.ru/news/2014/11/07/robot/>>, accessed 1 December 2014.

Russian Armed Forces Are Establishing Authorized Combat Robot Companies

The Russian Federation Armed Forces are activating separate subunits of robotic systems and complexes for combat use, Military-Industrial Commission (VPK) Collegium Member Oleg Martyanov informed Interfax-AVN.

"In accordance with a decision of the Defense Ministry leadership, separate combat robot companies are being established and their authorized structure and command and control entities are being formed in each military district and fleet," Martyanov said.

"Separate combat robot companies at the tactical echelon are being activated in accordance with the concept for development and combat employment of robotic complexes approved by the Russian Defense Ministry," Martyanov noted.

According to him, with the appearance of separate combat robot subunits in authorized formations and units, the need will arise to work out in practice the tactics of employing them under combat conditions and to make necessary corrections and updates to combat regulations and manuals.

"This now will be the next step in assimilating robotic equipment and complexes. And if we take into account that just a year or two ago we lacked a specific impression of robots for combat employment, in my view the current stage of rapid robotization of the troops unquestionably raises combat readiness of troops to a new level," Martyanov noted.

He stressed that the establishment of separate subunits armed with robotized attack complexes, unmanned aerial vehicles for various purposes, as well as other robotic equipment "is a new stage in assimilating precision state-of-the-art arms in the Army and Navy."

Martyanov earlier informed the Agency that the Russian Armed Forces have adopted a concept for development and combat employment of robotic complexes for the period up to 2025.

Specialists estimate that the years 2017-2018 should be milestones with respect to the development and deliveries to the troops of various kinds of robotic complexes as well as their employment on the battlefield, Martyanov noted.

(continued)

Continued: Combat Robot Companies Enter the Table of Organization and Equipment

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, "Combat Robot Companies Will Be Created in the Russian Army," Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 7 November 2014, <<http://www.rg.ru/2014/11/07/roboti-site.html>>, accessed 1 December 2014.

Combat Robot Companies Will Be Created in the Russian Army

...The Ministry of Defense is the main customer of combat robots. Based upon the Russian Government's decision, they are creating the Main Scientific Research Test Center of Robotics in the defense department. It is based in Moscow at the former Air Force Engineering Academy imeni Zhukovskiy. It is precisely there that the weapons of the future will emerge and be tested, including weapons based upon artificial intelligence. Notably, all of this work will not begin from scratch.

Military personnel are already testing some sort of "smart" hardware at their ranges. By way of illustration, commanders employed the Platforma-M combat robot for the first time at the exercises in Kaliningrad Oblast this year. It is a small remote controlled tracked vehicle. The designers equipped this complex with four grenade launchers and a Kalashnikov machinegun. The tests of the Platforma-M demonstrated its high effectiveness during the conduct of an engagement in populated areas and the conduct of strikes against fixed and mobile enemy targets...

...Using the new robot complex, one can conduct reconnaissance, detect and destroy fixed and mobile targets, carry out fire support of subunits, and patrol secure facilities and grounds. It is equipped with a Kord heavy machinegun, a Kalashnikov tank machinegun, and a mounted 30-mm automatic grenade launcher. The unique robot complex permits weapons guidance and target tracking and destruction in the automatic and semiautomatic mode. It is equipped with optical-electronic and radar reconnaissance equipment, the chassis' differentiated armoring systems, and a weapons platform. All of this permits it to combat saboteurs even at night...



"Platforma-M" is a universal combat platform used for the reconnaissance, detection and elimination of stationary and moving targets. The system is also capable of patrolling and protecting critical facilities. "Platforma-M" can provide support for targeting, and can engage targets in automatic and semi-automatic modes. The system is equipped full motion video and radar capabilities.

Source: http://informaplus.ru/uploads/posts/2014-06/rossiya-zadeystvovala-boevyh-robotov-v-uchenyah-v-evropeyskom-anklave_1.jpeg

*ER2014110779682622 Moscow Interfax-AVN Online in Russian 07 Nov 14
Interfax-AVN article: "Russian Armed Forces Are Establishing Authorized Combat Robot Companies -- Military-Industrial Commission"]*

New Ground Forces Field Manuals May Better Align Tactics to Doctrine

“The existing Ground Forces field manual is designed only for war, so it reflects provisions and recommendations for employing the Ground Forces only in a combat situations; provisions and recommendations concerning peacetime and the period of immediate threat of aggression are absent...”

- Aleksandr Korabelnikov, Doctor of Military Science

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian military’s recent successes involving annexing Crimea, destabilizing the Ukrainian government, and showcasing Russia’s force projection capabilities can arguably either be directly or indirectly attributed to Russia’s 2008 “New Look” reforms. These reforms drastically restructured the Armed Forces, for the first time putting the emphasis on quality instead of quantity.*

These reforms were, and still are much maligned in Russian military circles, but, despite changes of leadership at both the Defense Ministry and General Staff, most of these reforms have remained in their entirety or have been modified only slightly. In September 2014 Mikhail Popov, Deputy Secretary of the Russian Security Council, stated: “Moscow is to review its military doctrine, a move that is caused by expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe, problems of missile defense and the crisis situation in neighboring Ukraine.” Russia’s current military doctrine, drafted in 2010 at the height of the “New Look” reforms, is now being considered for modification in order to encompass the current thinking on “hybrid warfare” as posited by General Valeri Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, in a February 2013 article published in the Russian newspaper, Voenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer (Military-Industry Courier).

Although there have been massive reforms that changed many aspects of the Russian Armed Forces, there have been few changes in the field manuals at the tactical level that assist the commander in turning a strategic vision into operational and tactical objectives. Russia’s most recent field manuals were published in 2005-06 and were almost

Source: Aleksandr Korabelnikov, “Military-Field Breakdown: Armed Forces Need New Regulation Documents to Further Increase Combat Effectiveness,” Voenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer Online, 19 November 2014, <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/22730> , accessed 1 December 2014.

Military-Field Breakdown Armed Forces Need New Regulation Documents to Further Increase Combat Effectiveness

Modern Challenges

With consideration of the situation taking shape and in response to “sanctions warfare,” it was announced at a Security Council session that Russia will adopt an updated Military Doctrine before the end of December 2014. That need arose in connection with the appearance of new threats: events in Ukraine, expansion of NATO influence in the post-Soviet space, and strengthening of the American missile defense system...The updates will entail changes to military organizational development plans...Thus, the need has been dictated for work to update regulation documents, above all for the Ground Troops. By the way, new manuals on employing formations [divisions, and higher echelon units], military units [brigades, regiments, and separate battalions], and subunits [battalions and lower echelon units] already are being drafted in the Internal Troops...

Just what are field manuals?

“A field manual is an official guidance document containing theoretical provisions and practical recommendations for employing troops in combat, for preparing and conducting combat operations, for their comprehensive support, and for command and control of them. A field manual can be combined-arms or of a branch of the Armed Forces. It is drafted based on provisions of Military Doctrine, the experience of wars, combat and political training of the Armed Forces, the level of development they have reached, and prospects for technical outfitting and organizational development, as well as with consideration of the development of military-theoretical thought.” The current Ground Forces field manual is designed only for war, so it reflects provisions and recommendations for employing the Ground Forces only in a combat situations; provisions and recommendations concerning peacetime and the period of immediate threat of aggression are absent...

The Basis Is a Competent Structure

It is advisable to update the structure of the Ground Troops Field Manual based on the provisions of Military Doctrine. It is proposed to have three parts in it: the first should be devoted to tactical operations of the motorized rifle (tank) division, brigade, and regiment in the period of accomplishing measures of strategic deterrence and a counterterrorist operation; the second to operations of the division, brigade, and regiment in a period of immediate threat

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Continued: New Ground Forces Field Manuals May Better Align Tactics to Doctrine

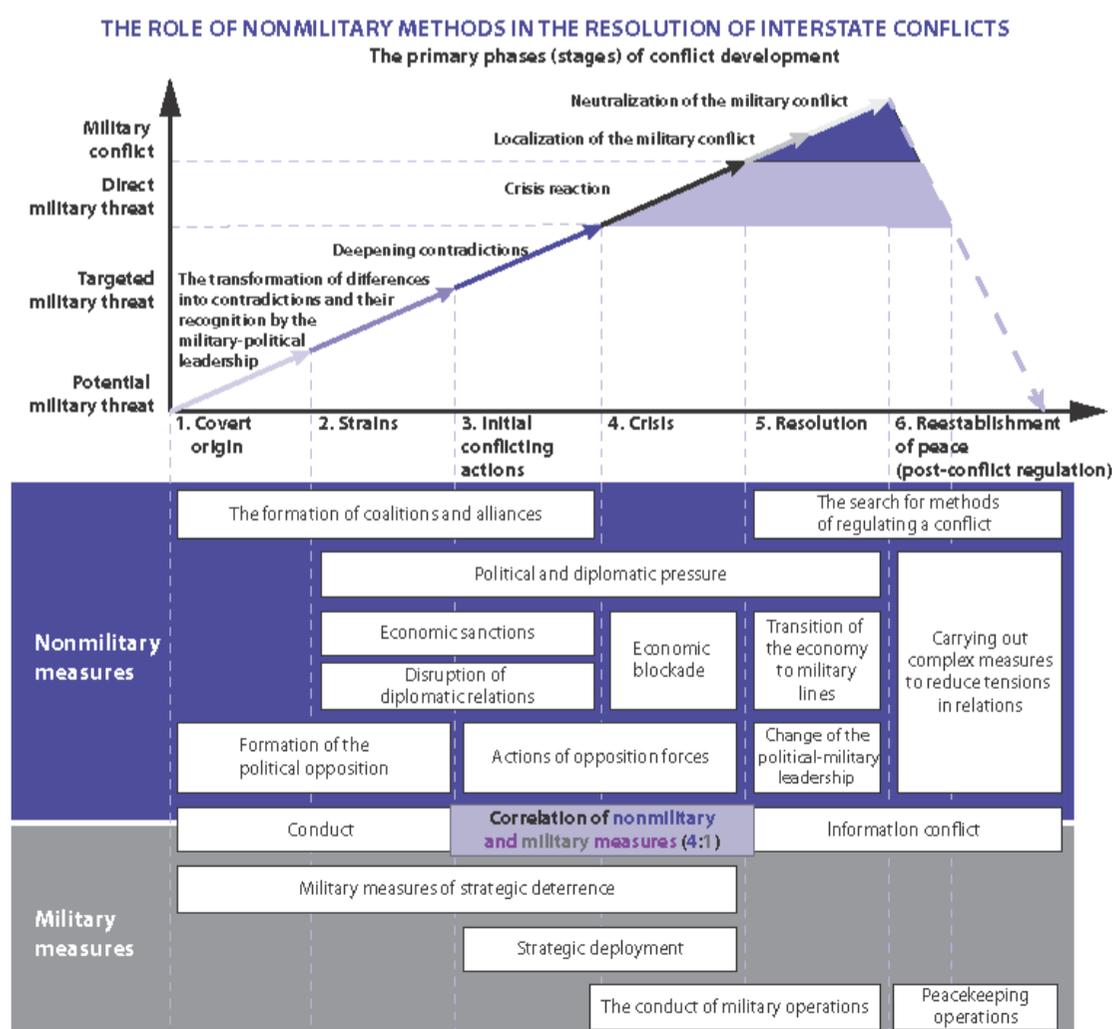
copied verbatim from previous Soviet editions of the same manuals. As the accompanying article discusses, the Russian Ground Forces are now releasing a completely revamped four-volume field manual set: Part I - division, brigade, and regiment operations; Part II - battalion and company operations; Part III - platoon, squad, and tank operations; and Part IV - fortified areas. The most interesting difference in this new edition is that the field manuals will now assist the commander in additionally performing tasks of military and nonmilitary conflict resolution, a major change from previous editions of these field manuals, which concerned only high intensity combat operations. Although these field manuals have yet to be publicly released, the "military and nonmilitary tasks" may be the same measures listed in the accompanying graphic, which was used in General Gerasimov's article about the future of warfare, or "hybrid warfare." End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

of aggression, when strategic deployment measures are being taken; and the third to tactical operations of the division, brigade, and regiment during a strategic operation...

The experience of a five-year experiment in reforming the Ground Troops permits concluding that although a great deal had been done, not all changes proved effective. Thus, the structures of "new look" brigades proved very crude and require modification and introduction of substantial changes and additions. Corrections must be made in the course of reform so as not to repeat the mistakes of preceding years, which were dictated by the absence of basic documents in the form of the Military Doctrine.

Now it has been decided to reorganize brigade tables of organization again. Instead of motorized rifle, tank, and air assault brigades, to create "heavy," "medium," and "light" brigades completely of the same type. A positive point is that they decided not to hurry greatly, but to begin with practical development of experimental tables of organization and to make necessary changes as the combat training process goes on. This time as well, however, fundamental principles have been neglected in creating organizational structures. Provisions of the Military Doctrine as well as capabilities of technical outfitting have not been taken into account. Therefore the first key task in the Russian Federation Defense Plan up to 2016 is to complete the process of establishing troop groupings consisting of divisions, brigades, and regiments. Painstaking work is necessary to determine the organizational structure of the formations, military units, and subunits which comprised the advanced look of the Armed Forces...

Source: Valeriy Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer Online*, 26 February 2013, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>>.



Russia Touts Roles, Capabilities, and Possible Targets for the Iskander

“The very presence of these weapons is a highly sobering factor against ill-considered moves in relation to Russia. Because a missile with destructive properties comparable to the impact of a nuclear weapon can be launched from its territory in an instant.”

Source: “America in Shock: All Europe in Iskander-M’s Sights,” Zvezda Online, 13 November 2014, <<http://tvzvezda.ru/news/forces/content/201411121543-iiyl.htm>>, accessed 1 December 2014.

OE Watch Commentary: *Russia’s land-based missiles lie in two organizations: mobile and silo-based intercontinental ballistic missiles are operated by Rocket Armies in the Strategic Rocket Forces (RSVN); tactical and theater ballistic missiles are controlled by the Russian Ground Forces in separate rocket brigades. Since 2010 Russia has transitioned five of these brigades from the old Tochka to the new Iskander theater ballistic missile systems. As the accompanying article explains, the Iskander missile system is a significant improvement over its predecessors (Tochka and Oka), and fills an important niche in Russian force projection. Tactical and theater ballistic missiles are far more important for Russia than for the U.S./NATO. In general, Russia believes that the U.S./NATO will maintain air superiority and so has heavily invested missile technologies to fill a niche that air power fills for the U.S./NATO. For similar reasons Russia has also heavily invested in electronic warfare and air defense capabilities.*

*Iskander brigades consist of three Iskander battalions, with each battalion having two Iskander batteries. Each Iskander battery has two transporter erector launcher vehicles, two reload vehicles, a command and control vehicle, a maintenance vehicle, and a support vehicle. In total, an Iskander brigade has 51 vehicles, consisting of: 12 launchers, 12 transporter-loaders, 11 command and control vehicles, 14 support vehicles, 1 servicing and maintenance vehicle, and 1 information preparation vehicle. Russia’s Iskander brigades are deployed in Kaliningrad and Leningrad Oblasts, the Far East, and in the North Caucasus; the fifth brigade will reportedly be deployed to Crimea to counter U.S. antiballistic missile assets in Romania. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

America in Shock: All Europe in Iskander-M’s Sights

Mobility, accuracy, and power -- the three main factors that make the Iskander-M operational-tactical system one of the most dangerous armament systems, a means of deterring large-scale aggression against Russia... For the West, the Iskander system’s entry into service proved to be a highly unexpected and unpleasant surprise. As the Oka’s successor, the Iskander operational-tactical system (NATO classification SS-26 Stone) has proved to be even more formidable and dangerous than its predecessor. Its missiles can cover a distance up to 500 km. Each of them can be fitted with a conventional warhead (comparable in its destructive effect to a nuclear device, but without the radioactive contamination of the terrain) or a cluster warhead comprising 54 individual submunitions (the system’s warheads may be penetrating, high-explosive fragmentation, fuel-air explosive or any other type).

“A total of up to 10 different warheads can be employed on the system,” Valeriy Kashin, general designer at the Kolomna Machine Building Design Bureau, where the Iskander-M was built, told the Zvezda TV channel. “The system continues to be upgraded, and today we have arrived at state testing of a new type of missile,” Kashin says. “Just like a good rifle, the Iskander allows the hunter to select the cartridge for whatever game he intends hunting. One type of ammunition for a duck, a completely different one for a bear.”

For instance, in the Iskander-K modification the system is equipped with two Kalibr long-range cruise missiles (NATO classification SS-N-27 Sizzler). The latter not only enable the engagement of ground targets belonging to an adversary’s infrastructure but can also perform the role of antiship weapon. Added to which it is being said that increasing the range from the current 480 km to several thousand kilometers is entirely feasible.

By virtue of this, an Iskander located deep in the rear is equally effective in destroying missile systems, long-range artillery, missile defense and air defense system facilities, aircraft at their airfields, command, control, and communications centers -- inclusive of underground facilities -- and other important point and area targets. In order to increase the probability of damage to well-protected targets, technical solutions that allow the missile to penetrate an adversary’s air defense or missile defense system, similar to that installed on the most advanced strategic missile, the Topol-M, have been built into the system.

In the field the Iskander is not dependent on the presence of reconnaissance satellites or aircraft in the skies above the combat operations area. It can also obtain target designation from a specialized combined-arms reconnaissance vehicle, an artillery

(continued)

Continued: Russia Touts Roles, Capabilities, and Possible Targets for the Iskander

observer, or from a photograph of a target's disposition on the terrain, which is scanned and uploaded into the system's onboard computer right at the tactical position...

The system's missiles will be guided to target by a self-contained correlation-type radar homing head employing in its design both radar guidance and an optical target detection system...our system's homing head is so sensitive that it enables a target to be successfully engaged even on moonless nights, when there is no additional natural illumination, or a moving target to be hit with an error of plus or minus 2 meters.

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>



The Future of Russian Force Projection: Foreign Legionnaires?

OE Watch Commentary: *The accompanying article discusses a proposal by Roman Khudyakov, a Russian State Duma Deputy, to establish a Russian version of the French Foreign Legion in Central Asia. The purpose of such a force would be to fend off potential Islamic militants who could threaten the region as US/NATO troops withdraw from Afghanistan (he also mentions the possibility of using such a force to handle the current situation in Eastern Ukraine, but this idea seems rather far-fetched, as the primary combatants are ethnic Russian and ethnic Ukrainian citizens who are already devoted to the cause).*

This effort could be seen in the light of a Russia Federation that is experimenting with a new theory of “hybrid warfare,” which takes a favorable view of unorthodox force projection means, such as troops operating unofficially (“little green men” or “polite people”). These hybrid forces might include Cossacks, Russian-sponsored partisans, peacekeepers (interested in force projection rather than peace), private security companies, and now possibly a Foreign-Legion-like entity. On the surface, the idea seems sound. Russia has strong ties to Central Asia and is concerned that instability that spreads from Afghanistan to post-Soviet Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan) could easily spread into an already turbulent southern Russia.

Russia has generally good relations with the post-Soviet Central Asian states, maintaining strong bilateral and multilateral (CIS, CSTO, SCO, etc.) economic and military ties. As Khudyakov mentions, Russian officers have commanded Kyrgyz and Tajik border troops patrolling the Chinese and Afghan borders, a practice which was gradually phased out over the last ten years. In addition, Central Asian labor is cheap and plentiful in Russia, with remittances from Central Asian workers being large sources of incoming

Source: Igor Molotov, “Duma Asks Ministry of Defense to Set Up Foreign Legion,” *Izvestiya Online*, 10 November 2014, <<http://izvestia.ru/news/579099>>, accessed 1 December 2014.

Duma Asks Ministry of Defense to Set Up Foreign Legion

Roman Khudyakov, a State Duma deputy from the LDPR faction, has asked the Ministry of Defense and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to consider the possibility of a military formation consisting of foreign citizens being set up within the Russian Army. It is being proposed that the formation be similar to the French Foreign Legion. According to the parliamentarian, the Russian foreign legion may become a guarantor of stability in Central Asia and a response to possible aggression by Islamic State (ISIL) in the region...

It should be noted that Russia has already received threats from ISIL. According to some sources, field commander Omar al-Shishani intends to lead the invasion of Russia. There have also been reports about preparations for an offensive by ISIL terrorists on Central Asian countries through Afghanistan. In the opinion of the deputy, the foreign legion would be able to deal with the terrorists before they appear on Russian territory...

We cannot afford to turn a blind eye to the fact that the ISIL fanatics are already preparing their expansion into Central Asia and Russia. And we have to stop them outside the Russian borders and preferably without the participation of the Russian Army. The foreign legion would be able to cope with that task,” the parliamentarian said...

Residents of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan would be happy to join the legion. There are no problems here. And all the commanders and instructors would be regular Russian officers. We are in fact already doing this in Tajikistan. All Tajik military personnel are trained at Russian universities. So let us properly formalize all of that and legalize it. We have sufficient experience and resources,” the parliamentarian stressed...

Units from the legion may be sent to help Novorossiia [southeastern Ukraine]. And most importantly, I want to point out that such a formation will be ideologically motivated, unlike private military companies, which fight solely for the money. To be a legionnaire means to be the elite,” Khudyakov said.

The State Duma has already considered an initiative for foreigners to serve in the Russian Army. Sergey Zhigarev, first deputy chairman of the State Duma Defense Committee, has spoken of an earlier proposal to allow foreign citizens to serve in the Russian Armed Forces, with the incentive being that the serviceman and his family will be granted citizenship at the end of the contract...

“What will happen is that we will arm foreign citizens with Russian weapons and train them to use these weapons without them being Russian Federation citizens. If we take the French Legion as a basis, it has always operated and been located outside French territory. There needs to be a clear understanding where the Russian foreign legion will be based, providing it is set up. It should not remain in Russia,” the deputy stressed...

“Once the Americans leave Afghanistan, the mullahs will turn their attention to their neighbors. That is why we provide free training to officers and military-technical specialists and transfer military equipment from our arsenals that is suitable for the conditions of the Central Asian theater of war. Certainly, it is primarily national contingents that will have to fight because we cannot pay with the blood of our soldiers for stability in Central Asia. But a foreign legion may be appropriate there,” Korotchenko says...

(continued)

Contued: The Future of Russian Force Projection: Foreign Legionnaires?

cash flows for the poorer Central Asian states. Khudyakov's plan claims to promote stability in post-Soviet Central Asia and maintain a light Russian foot print, while providing funding for cash-strapped Central Asians.

*Unfortunately, current political realities in Central Asia make such a proposal unlikely. In the current Central Asian political climate the idea of having Russian officers command local troops would be unpalatable, with the notable exception of Tajikistan. Khudyakov's proposal is unlikely to be implemented in the current political environment, but in the event of a failed post-Soviet Central Asian state scenario, which is certainly plausible in these states with strong ethnic tensions and no clear paths for the succession of senior leadership, it may become more attractive. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Russia's Strategic Mobility

Supporting 'Hard Power' to 2020?

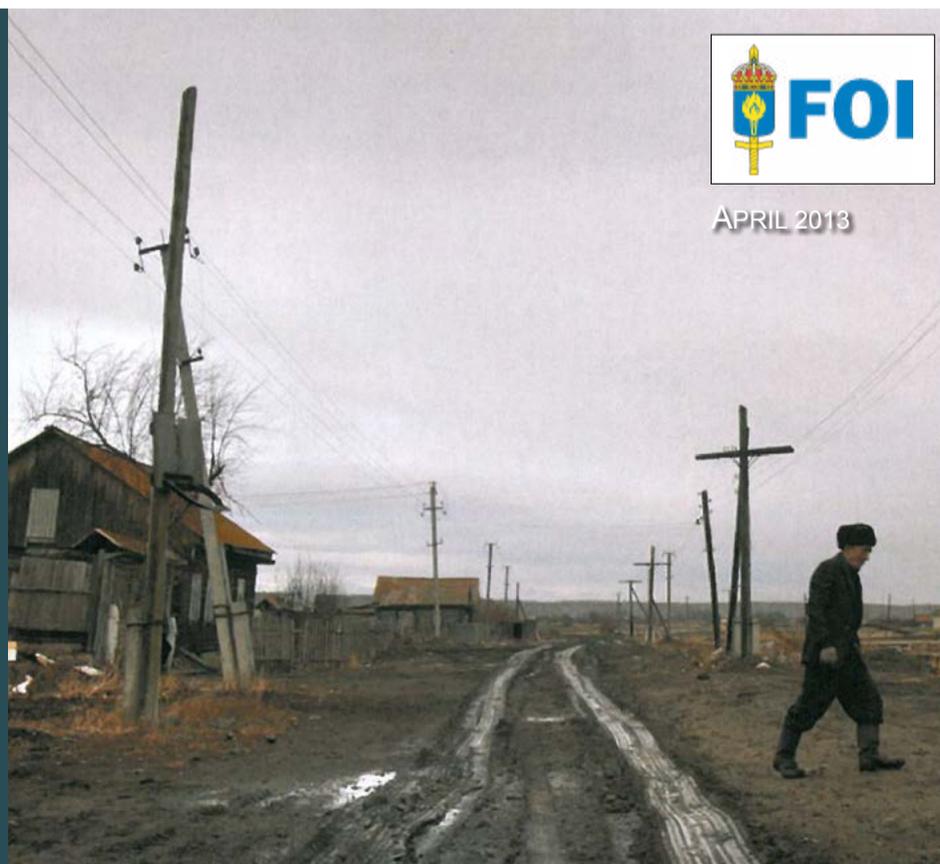
By Roger N. McDermott

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

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



APRIL 2013



Russian Expert: Source of Radical Islamist Threat to Russia Comes from Central Asia

OE Watch Commentary: On 4 December 2014, hours before Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered his annual state of the union address, militant Islamists launched a terrorist attack in Grozny, Chechnya's capital, according to press reports. Reportedly, at least 20 died in the attack. This spark of violence in the region that in recent years has been relative peaceful prompted a renewed discussion in the Russian media about radical Islamism in Russia.

While this discussion primarily appears to have focused specifically on the Grozny attack and on radical Islamism in the Caucasus, the accompanying 10 December 2014 excerpt from *CentraAsia.ru* by Evgeniy Satanovsky, an expert on Israel and the Middle East and president of Russia's Middle East Institute, presents a different angle. He argues that the main radical Islamism threat to Russia comes not from the Caucasus (a view that has prevailed in Russia), but rather from Central Asia. He concedes that this may have been the case before, but is not true anymore.

One example he provides is what the Russian media often refer to as the "roadside killers" case, which refers to a gang of killers who brutally murdered at least 14 people on Moscow's suburban roads since May 2014. Since then many theories have floated in the Russian media that the group might have been anyone from Ukrainian security forces to radical Islamists. When the authorities reportedly caught some members of the group in November 2014, they cited these individuals' radical Islamist connections, though experts cautioned not to draw quick conclusions about what radical group they belonged to. According to some Russian press reports based on eyewitness interviews, these individuals were from Central Asia.

Satanovsky writes that they received Russian citizenship and worked in the homes of senior government officials, and at least one of them spent time in Pakistan, which he links with Central Asia. In his view, this is further proof that Central Asia is the region to watch.

He also believes that the Pakistani-Saudi intelligence community introduced "moles" from Central Asia into Russian territory in the 1990s, citing the fact that that Russian authorities had detained "individuals from Pakistan Islamist structures" in the North Caucasus during the Chechen independence wars of the 1990s. These individuals, he writes, were "involved not so much in support of fellow believers...but intelligence activities... in their classical version."

Satanovsky writes that in the context of rising tensions on the Afghan-Turkmen, Afghan-Uzbek and Afghan-Tajik borders and "the presence in Russia of millions of people from Central Asia on a regular basis, the possibility to form on this basis a wide general intelligence-subversive network is more than real." Indeed, as the West is pulling out of Afghanistan, tension on these borders and in Afghanistan are certainly worth watching.

Satanovsky probably brings up Pakistan-Saudi relations vis-à-vis Russia because these countries, especially Russia and Saudi Arabia, have a history of complex relations and opposing views on a number of crucial international issues. Many in Russia, including top officials, believe that Saudi Arabia in particular has been responsible for some terrorist attacks within Russia, and that the country is actively working to destabilize Russia through sponsoring terrorist activities in Chechnya and elsewhere. Indeed, some have publicly accused Saudi Arabia of doing so through financing al-Qaeda.

Source: E. Satanovsky, "Исламский радикализм в Россию "понаехал. Источник террористических угроз для страны не Кавказ, а Средняя Азия, - Е.Сатановский" (Islamic radicalism has come to Russia 'in large numbers.' Source of terrorist threats to the country is not the Caucasus but Central Asia - E.Satanovsky), *CentraAsia.ru*, 10 December 2014. <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1418160120>

...It cannot be excluded that up to a certain point it [theory that threat from Central Asia was minimal] was true. But judging by the "roadside killers case" in Moscow's suburbs, it no longer fits. What is important, key members of this group at the time not only received Russian citizenship, but also worked in the homes of senior officials, even from law enforcement agencies, minimizing the risk of being caught (in this case, the randomness factor worked).

This, together with information that at least one of them spent time in Pakistan brings us back to the question of how many "moles" from Central Asia were introduced into Russian territory since the beginning of the 90s by the Pakistani-Saudi intelligence community and where exactly.

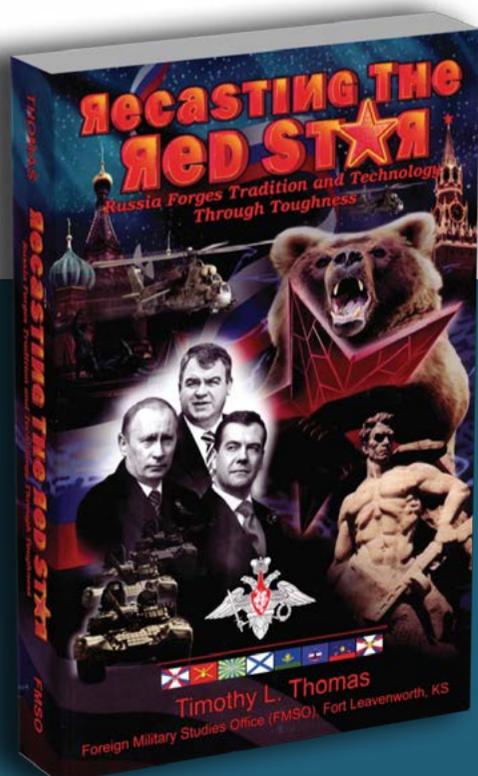
This is confirmed by Russian law enforcement agencies' detentions in the North Caucasus during the Chechen wars of individuals from Pakistani Islamist structures involved not so much in support of fellow believers...but intelligence activities... in their classical version.

Given the rising tensions on the Afghan-Turkmen, Afghan-Uzbek and Afghan-Tajik border (not to mention Kyrgyzstan, which is in a state of constant internal instability) and the presence in Russia of millions of people from Central Asia on a regular basis, the possibility to form on this basis a wide general intelligence-subversive network is more than real

(continued)

Continued: Russian Expert: Source of Radical Islamist Threat to Russia Comes from Central Asia

*When it comes to Central Asia and radical Islam, accurate data are often unavailable, but certain reports have documented radical activity in this region, and that point certainly should not be ignored, although the Caucasus should not be dismissed either. While experts debate the sources of the radical Islamism threat to Russia, that this discussion also includes Central Asia certainly shows that radical Islamism remains a serious—if not an increasingly serious—problem in Russia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***



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.

UK Report on Refugees in the South Caucasus: Armenian and Azeri Perspectives

11 December 2014

OE Watch Commentary: In December 2014 the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office published a report entitled “Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the South Caucasus: The Numbers Game” (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/384760/South_Caucasus_II_2_.pdf). It did not go unnoticed in the Russian-language press in the South Caucasus.

By its own description, the report “looks at the numbers of refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs) currently living in the three South Caucasus states – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia – each of which has experienced major population shifts over the last two decades as a result of territorial conflicts in the region.” These territorial conflicts, the most well-known of which is the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, occurred after the Soviet Union collapsed. The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in particular led to what the report describes as “complete disruption of people-to-people contacts.” This did not happen in Georgia.

Overall, since 1991 the South Caucasus has seen major population displacements, which continue to impact the region’s politics and economies, particularly when it comes to unresolved conflicts in the region. A report on the current demographic situation in the region is certainly useful.

The accompanying excerpts—one from Armenia’s ArmeniaToday, and the other from Azerbaijan’s NewsAzerbaijan.ru—show different reactions within each country to the report’s findings. The ArmeniaToday report is more broad, discussing Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, though its reporting on Azerbaijan appears to be more negative, highlighting that, according to the report, the total number of refugees in Azerbaijan is 1,495, while there are approximately 600,000 IDPs. However, according to Armenia Today, in public statements Azerbaijani officials speak of one million refugees and displaced persons. The British report explains this discrepancy by the fact that the Azeri figure of one million includes an estimated 250,000 ethnic Azeri refugees who fled Armenia in the early 1990s, whom the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) does not recognize as refugees, since they have presumably either left Azerbaijan or gained Azeri citizenship.

Source: “Доклад: Армения, Азербайджан и Грузия зарегистрировали крупную миграцию населения за последние 20 лет” (Report: Armenia , Azerbaijan and Georgia have Registered a Large Population Migration Over the Last 20 years), Armenia Today, 11 December 2014. http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=122135

... The report notes that the number of registered refugees in Armenia amounts to little more than 3,000 people. In addition, over the past 1.5 years in Armenia there were registered about 12 thousand additional refugees from Syria, but most of them have received Armenian citizenship.

These numbers demonstrate a sharp decline in the number of refugees, whose number, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, was about 220 thousand in 2005. (170 thousand of them - ethnic Armenians who had previously lived in Azerbaijan). The decrease in the number of refugees is connected to their migration to Russia or providing them with Armenian citizenship.

According to the UN, the number of refugees in Azerbaijan - 1,495, [and] the number of displaced persons - a little more than 600 thousand. “Displaced people - almost all former residents of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas, which are now under the control of Armenia”, the report says.

However, the report of the British Foreign Office underscores, in public statements Azerbaijani officials speak of “one million refugees and displaced persons ...”...

Source: “Великобритания поддерживает право азербайджанских беженцев на возвращение на свои территории» (Great Britain Supports Right of Azerbaijani Refugees to Return to Their Territories), NewsAzerbaijan.ru, 11 December 2014. <http://www.newsazerbaijan.ru/karabakh/20141211/301351981.html>

Azerbaijan is a country with one of the largest groups of refugees and internally displaced persons in the world in per capita terms, and their right to return to their territory must be upheld in any settlement, according to the report, “Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) from South Caucasus: the numbers game,” by the British Foreign Office, according to the department’s website.

The report analyzes issues and population movements that took place in Azerbaijan and Georgia after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the economic consequences of this

The report recognizes that these persons are victims of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

“The right of refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes is very important, according to Baku, to restore its territorial integrity, and, in principle, is supported by the international community as an essential component of any long-term solution,” the document notes....

(continued)

Continued: UK Report on Refugees in the South Caucasus: Armenian and Azeri Perspectives

NewsAzerbaijan.ru tellingly titles its article “Great Britain Supports Right of Azerbaijani Refugees to Return to their Territories” and highlights that, according to the report, “Azerbaijan is a country with one of the largest groups of refugees and internally displaced persons in the world in per capita terms.” The report indeed finds that Azerbaijan, according to the UNHCR, has a recorded refugee population of 1,494 and an IDP population of just over 600,000. Indeed, the report highlights, “This makes Azerbaijan host to one of the largest populations of displaced persons in the world in per capita terms.” Although the report does recognize the right of Azerbaijani refugees to return, it hardly appears to be its central point.

ArmeniaToday reports that, according to the UNHCR, Armenia is hosting approximately 15,000 refugees, including 12,000 Syrian refugees—a sharp decline from 220,000 (170,000 of them ethnic Armenians who had resided in Azerbaijan prior to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict) since 2005. This number declined so drastically because many of these refugees have either migrated to Russia or obtained Armenian citizenship. This is consistent with the report.

Taken together, these excerpts each provide pieces—but not the entire picture—of a complicated demographic situation in the region, particularly in Armenia and Azerbaijan, from both Armenian and Azerbaijani perspectives. They also demonstrate that the South Caucasus remains a deeply politicized region when it comes to population displacement, and reporting on this issue can be biased, while little information is available in general. As the UK report itself notes, “[A] degree of selectivity is evident from all sides in terms of how the region’s refugee and IDP issues are deployed. Underpinning this is a dearth of reliable data on the views of displaced communities themselves...” Yet this issue remains crucial to ultimate conflict resolution in this region. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

RESTRUCTURING THE TACTICAL RUSSIAN ARMY FOR UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

By Lester W. Grau, PhD, TRISA Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO)

Russian wars in Afghanistan (1979-1989) and Chechnya (1994-1996 and 1999-2006) reintroduced their ground forces to nonlinear warfare that lacked a clear front line and a rear area. This paper examines how this combat was fragmented into close-combat fights, and how battles were fought both within urban centers and remote locations.



<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/restructuring-for-unconventional-warfare.pdf>

Russian Expert: Iran's Perspectives on Partnership with Russia

9 December 2014

OE Watch Commentary: *The Moscow-based journal, Rossiya v Globalnoi Politike (Russia in Global Affairs), focuses on Russia's foreign policy issues. On 9 December 2014 Fyodor Lukyanov, chief editor of the journal and chairman of the Presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, wrote an article about Iran's current views on Russia. Lukyanov is a well known and influential foreign policy expert who generally tends to favor a multipolar model for maintaining global stability. He also tends to support Russian President Vladimir Putin.*

Lukyanov's main point is that Iran is uncertain whether Russia is serious about a shift towards the East or if this is a temporary tactical move. "Iranian colleagues are now primarily interested in one thing. Is Russia serious (meaning the conflict with the West and the beginning of a major reorientation towards the east)? Or is it just that a bad moment came up in a relationship with a familiar partner..." He adds that from Iran's perspective Russia had reneged on promises before and changed orientations back towards the West, which only gives Tehran more cause for doubting Russia. Moscow, writes Lukyanov, did vote in favor of sanctions against Iran, despite speaking against them. Lukyanov leaves out that Moscow had also, according to expert accounts, successfully worked to weaken the sanctions before they were passed. He adds that Moscow had cancelled the contract for supplying S-300 weapons to Iran—a contract which, in Tehran's view, did not fall under the sanctions—and this cancellation was a "separate emotional trauma" for Iran.

Lukyanov also provides a Russian perspective on the US-Iran nuclear talks and Iran's view on how Russia feels about a potential Iran-US agreement. "Whether Russia needs the Iran-US agreement – is an ambiguous issue. Iran's leaving its isolation, of course, will open for it many opportunities which the country lacks today. And it will transform Russia from Tehran's exclusive partner to one of them, even if an old and important one."

Ultimately, in Lukyanov's view, Russia and Iran will never be allies because Iran, like Russia, values its own independence and interests too much. Yet, he writes Tehran is the only "partner" that is "interested in Russia" in the context of "new geopolitical conditions" that for Moscow, are here to stay for a long time. He concludes, "Firmness in defending own interests—is the best way to convince Iran of seriousness of intentions." End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)

Source: F.A. Lukyanov, "Сомневающийся Иран (Doubting Iran)", Rossiya v Globalnoi Politike (Russia In Global Affairs), 9 December 2014. <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/redcol/Somnevayuschiisya-Iran-17168>

...Whether Russia needs the Iran-US agreement – is an ambiguous issue. Iran's leaving its isolation, of course, will open for it many opportunities which the country lacks today. And it will transform Russia from Tehran's exclusive partner to one of them, even if an old and important one. This is so, yet Iran itself wants to come out of isolation. And people tired of sanctions and the political elite, which has ambitions of at least regional caliber, if not beyond. So the bet shouldn't be placed on the fact that the partner has no choice. Choice will appear sooner or later, but will an unpleasant aftertaste from Moscow's behavior will remain...

..Iranian colleagues are now primarily interested in one thing. Is Russia serious (meaning the conflict with the West and the beginning of a major reorientation towards the east)? Or is it just that a bad moment came up in a relationship with a familiar partner, so it swept up in the search for alternatives...

From Iran's perspective, this happened before. The constantly-asked question - if we're together so strongly opposed to American hegemony, why had Russia voted in favor of all the packages of UN sanctions against Iran? Resisted, resented, but in the end voted yet? Separate emotional trauma - cancellation of the contract for the supply of S-300 in 2010. Iranians piously believe that this contract did not fall under the sanctions did fall get the contract, and it was quite possible to deliver the goods...

Iran—is a country with many demands, impressive willpower potential, tenacity and sophisticated diplomacy. In addition, it is located at the crossroads of major global processes. In the new geopolitical conditions, which Moscow, it seems, has encountered for a long time, Tehran—is the only partner, which is interested in Russia. It won't be an ally, because, like Russia, it values its own independence and interests too much. Firmness in defending own interests—is the best way to convince Iran of seriousness of intentions. The main thing is that they be clear and logical...

“...who would have thought a year ago that Russians and Ukrainians, the Slavic brothers, would fight like big boys?”

OE Watch Commentary: In late November 2014 Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenka appointed Major General Andrey Ravkov as the country's new defense minister. The appointment surprised many military observers. While his predecessor, Lieutenant General Yuriy Zhadobin, had reached retirement age, there had been speculation that his term might be extended or that he would be replaced by a senior general from the General Staff. As the brief excerpt suggests, there were two cogent reasons why Lukashenka would select the relatively young and junior Ravkov to serve as defense minister.

First and foremost, Ravkov is an ethnic Belarusian. While the distinction between Russian and Belarusian might be blurred in the West, the question of ethnic differences among Slavic peoples has assumed a greater significance over the past year. The conflict in Ukraine has forced many within the military to examine questions of national allegiance. Many senior officers in Belarus, to include General Ravkov, were trained in Soviet/Russian military schools when fraternal relations were much warmer. These relations have become more strained over the past year. As the article painfully points out, “who would have thought a year ago that Russians and Ukrainians, the Slavic brothers, would fight like big boys?” By selecting Ravkov, Lukashenka likely wants to ensure that the country's military leadership remains loyal to Belarusian national interests.

Secondly, and perhaps more important, is Ravkov's special forces background. Though he lacks experience within the General Staff, “he commanded the Vitsebsk paratroopers from the 103rd Guards Separate Mobile Brigade of Special Operations Forces,” one of the country's most elite units. The events in Ukraine over the past year have demonstrated the importance of a well trained and disciplined special force—and not just for offensive operations.

The leadership in Belarus continues to walk the fine line between closer integration with Russia and strengthening national sovereignty. As suggested in the OEW entry from last month (“Russian Airbase in Belarus Redux”), Russia's annexation of Crimea has revealed possible dangers of forming close military ties with

Source: Alyaksandr Klaskowski, “Lukashenka Entrusted Army to Belarusian Who Was Drilled in ‘Kremlevka’,” Belorusskiye Novosti, 28 November 2014.

Experts would never have guessed: On 27 November, Alyaksandr Lukashenka appointed Andrey Ravkov, a little-known 47-year-old major general, defense minister.

The president himself apparently hesitated before so abruptly promoting the commander of the North-Western Operational Command: “Many people warned me that he had not served in the central apparatus, that he was not familiar with these rules, and so on. This might be a drawback, but quite often it is an advantage.”

In the end, as the head of state and commander in chief explained, the principle of rejuvenating the personnel prevailed....

...Some analysts put special emphasis on the newly appointed minister's roots: He hails from the village of Revyaka, Vitsebsk Province.

The previous minister, 60-year-old Yuriy Zhadobin, who was transferred to the reserve on account of his age, was born in Dnipropetrovsk [Ukraine]. And, indeed, there have traditionally been many people from outside Belarus among Lukashenka's security officials, which has always irritated nationalists.

Now, according to certain observers, a course toward a soft Belarusization of security personnel has been set. However, others note that this year's Ukraine events have shown that membership of the titular nation does not constitute a guarantee of loyalty.

In addition, numerous Belarusian officers undergo training in Russia. Ravkov obtained two diplomas there: He graduated with a gold medal from the Moscow Higher Military Command School (unofficially known -- from its former location -- as the Kremlevka), and subsequently with distinction from the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces....

...In general, the level of attachment of our Army (as well as of the economy and the country in general) to Russia is colossal. Even at the symbolic level. Ravkov's first alma mater was the Suvorov Military School. Even though it is located in Minsk, the capital of independent Belarus, it still bears the name (and will most likely continue to bear it for a long time) of the Russian generalissimo who was noted for his suppression of uprisings in our region.

The Belarus-Russia “brotherhood-in-arms” (by the way, General Ravkov and his fighters participated in the Zapad-2013 military exercises, jointly conducted with Russia) has always added to Lukashenka's bravery in relations with the West. Additionally, it helped him obtain various concessions in exchange for promises to lie down under NATO tanks.

But it became much more ambiguous after Crimea and the beginning of the war in the Donbas.

We are not only talking about the fact that the Kremlin has been locked in a protracted clinch with the Westerners because of Ukraine, NATO dug its heels in --

Continued: New Defense Minister in Belarus

Russia. The new Belarusian defense minister will be challenged to balance good relations with Russia while defending Belarus' national independence. End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

and this creates the danger of a new edition of the Cold War, which Belarus will certainly be dragged into as well.

Crimea in itself obviously also frightened the Belarusian leader, illustrating that the Kremlin, having sensed a threat in the post-Soviet space, is prepared to push its tanks through all borders.

Moscow is now establishing its airbase in Babruysk, and the “little green men” [armed Russian soldiers in unmarked uniforms] also ended up in Crimea owing to the presence of a Russian base there. And, in general, who would have thought a year ago that Russians and Ukrainians, the Slavic brothers, would fight like big boys? In short, these days only the devil knows who is your brother-in-arms and who your eventual enemy....

...In particular, he predicts that this will apply to military education, as well as ideological training, consolidation of national identity, and raising loyalty among soldiers and officers toward the Belarusian state. The process is likely to be accompanied by a “reduction of Russia’s informational influence on the Army,” Belorusskiye Novosti’s interlocutor supposed.

General Ravkov’s biography contains one more noteworthy fact: He commanded the Vitsebsk paratroopers from the 103rd Guards Separate Mobile Brigade of Special Operations Forces.

Incidentally, Lukashenka visited this elite unit last summer. And he emphasized at the time that it was necessary to raise the mobility of our Army. In particular, we need to manufacture our own equipment for that purpose....

...The role of special operations forces, with which General Ravkov is familiar, will certainly increase now. Such troops are suitable, in particular, for hybrid warfare. In case anyone’s unaware, that’s more or less what has been happening in the Donbas.

Russia's Magic Radar

21 November 2014

“Krasukha-2 analyzes signal types and subjects enemy radar stations to powerful smart jamming radiation. As a result, aircraft lose the ability to detect targets and to direct high-precision weapons against them.”

OE Watch Commentary: Russian military planners have been astute observers of major combat operations over the past two decades, noting the vital role which air and space assets have played in determining the course of the conflicts. To counteract and neutralize air and space threats, the Russian military continues to modernize its air force and air defense capabilities. It is also claiming to have made significant advances in the field of electronic warfare (EW). As the excerpt from the accompanying article points out, the Russian military is in the process of fielding mobile EW systems (Moskva-1 and Krasukha-2) which purportedly cannot only blind surveillance and attack aircraft and satellites, but can also distort the enemy's digital signals on these platforms.

While the article provides few technical characteristics of the new Moskva-1 or Krasukha-2 EW systems, it does claim that the radar on the Krasukha-2 “could simply burn all the electronics of enemy aircraft, and even satellites - it is destructive over hundreds of kilometers.” It goes on to brag that such a capability of frying electronic systems is too crude, and that by altering the digital signal this EW system can force enemy aircraft (to include UAVs) to “attack their own military facilities.”

As pointed out in last month's OEW (“Russian EW or IW?”), it is increasingly difficult to verify many Russian technological claims. Russian weapon manufacturers often make the assertion that their products have “no analogues in the world.” These claims may not only strengthen the marketing of select Russian military industries (for example, see this promotional video for the Krasukha-2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6FBJpg1vG8>) but also force potential rivals to consider developing appropriate countermeasures. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

Source: Sergey Ptichkin, “АВАКС обманут шепотом: Радиоэлектронная борьба выходит в космос” [AWACS Deceived by Whisper; Electronic Warfare Goes into Space], Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 21 November 2014. <http://www.rg.ru/2014/11/21/reb.html>

AWACS Deceived by Whisper

The first four Moskva-1 electronic warfare [EW] systems will be supplied to troops before the end of the year. And in 2015 the military will get two Krasukha-2 mobile EW systems, according to a TASS report citing a source in the defense industry complex.

The Defense Ministry is planning to commission four Moskva-1 products before the end of November, with a further five machines due to be handed over next year. Also next year, the military will be supplied with two Krasukha-2 mobile EW systems.

The Moskva-1 can not only apply interference, but scan airspace and also function as a control and reconnaissance command center. The system is able to operate in passive radar mode, remaining invisible to the enemy.

Krasukha-2 actually has no analogues in the world. The system was developed at the Gradient scientific research institute and is serially produced by the Kvant science and production association in Velikiy Novgorod. At one time such information was a state secret but today it is generally available. Open sources report that the system effectively covers command posts, troop groupings, PVO [air defense] assets, and important industrial and administrative/political facilities.

Krasukha-2 analyzes signal types and subjects enemy radar stations to powerful smart jamming radiation. As a result, aircraft lose the ability to detect targets and to direct high-precision weapons against them. The enemy aircraft leaves the airspace monitored by the EW system and abandons its combat missions.

The key words here are smart jamming. Krasukha-2 does not stifle the other signal with powerful radiation, although that could be done simply. Moreover, the beam that is directed by its radar could simply burn all the electronics of enemy aircraft, and even satellites - it is destructive over hundreds of kilometers. But that is too easy.

The EW station with the playful name first probes the target object with a mild radiation scan, determines its frequency bands, and then also gently and imperceptibly inserts itself into, for example, an AWACS-type long-range radar detection system or a military telecommunications satellite.

And, just like the legendary Siren, it lulls the flying command posts and satellites with virtual tales about nonexistent targets and dangers. The result is an attack on their own military facilities that suddenly appear as absolutely hostile to the AWACS....

OE Watch Commentary: *This past month Russia established a new holiday on its nation's calendar, designating 3 December as the "Day of the Unknown Soldier." The proclamation of this new holiday aligns well with the growing sense of patriotism in Russia today. While there has been a memorial to the graves of unknown soldiers adjacent to the Kremlin since 1966, 2014 is the first year that the 3 December holiday was officially added to the country's calendar.*

Over the past decade the Russian government has made a renewed, concerted effort to account for the millions who perished in WW II. Prior to this, much of the recovery effort was done haphazardly, often by unpaid volunteers, some of whom were more interested in uncovering relics than in honoring the dead. In 2009 the Russian government established an electronic database whereby family members, historians and the general public can research the background of Soviet soldiers and civilians who perished in the war (<http://www.obd-memorial.ru/html/default.htm>). To date, more than 13 million archival records have been added to this database.

2015 will mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War, yet the remains of thousands of Soviet soldiers are still being uncovered on an annual basis. As the first excerpt from the Ministry of Defense press release points out, in 2014 alone more than 14,000 human remains were uncovered, and of these, only about 1,000 could be identified by name.

*The memory of the Soviet victory over Nazi forces holds considerable sway in Russia today and serves as a focal point for much of the Kremlin's propaganda. Yet the timing of this new holiday is curious. Over the past eight months, there have been repeated allegations that Russian soldiers, who had either volunteered or were ordered to help support the separatist movement in Eastern Ukraine, and who died while fighting, have been buried in secret in Russia. Attempts to investigate these burials by members of human rights groups and journalists have been consistently thwarted. As the second brief excerpt points out, a formal investigation into the alleged deaths of 25 Russian soldiers who fought in Ukraine this past summer was closed in December. Given the current context, Russian authorities may have had ulterior motives in designating this new holiday to honor unknown soldiers who died in battle. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

Source: "Сегодня в России отмечается новая памятная дата – День Неизвестного солдата" [Today in Russia Marked a New Notable Date-The Day of the Unknown Soldier], Russian Ministry of Defense, 3 December 2014. http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12002573@egNews

Today in Russia marked the first time a new memorable date - the Day of the Unknown Soldier.

On 3 December 1966, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the defeat of German troops near Moscow, remains of an unknown soldier were transferred from a mass grave at the 41st km of the Leningrad highway and solemnly buried in Alexander Garden. Inscribed upon the grave of the Unknown Soldier reads the phrase: "Your name is unknown. The feat is immortal. "

The establishment of the Day of the Unknown Soldier - this is not just a single date in the calendar, a day when even once a year will be given a tribute to all those who died in the defense of the Motherland and whose names have not yet been determined.

The Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation continues to search for unaccounted military personnel.

In 2014 alone, during search operations, the Russian Defense Ministry in collaboration with the non-governmental groups "search movements of Russia" found about 14 thousand bodies. Of these former Soviet officers, soldiers and sailors who died defending the Motherland, about 1000 bodies were identified.

Source: "Следователи отказались разбираться с данными о гибели российских военных, предположительно, на Украине" [Investigators refused to deal with data regarding the death of Russian military personnel, presumably in Ukraine], newru.com, 3 December 2014. <http://www.newsr.com/russia/03dec2014/no.html>

Chief Military Investigation Department (GVSU) of the Investigative Committee of Russia (MRS) will not deal with numerous information media and human rights activists about the death of Russian troops this summer, presumably in Ukraine. This is stated in the response agency organization "Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg", as reported by the newspaper "Vedomosti" .

“...Moscow is afraid of the emergence in the Donbass of ‘little Yanukovyches with their own little kingdoms,’ the decentralization of the DNR and LNR, and their disintegration into ‘fiefdoms.’...”

OE Watch Commentary: As of mid-December the fighting between separatist and Ukrainian forces in Eastern Ukraine appears to be tapering off. Some of this lull may be due to the advent of winter and the conflict’s increasing costs. The ongoing struggle has placed considerable strain upon the Ukrainian economy which had already been teetering on bankruptcy. Falling oil prices and Western sanctions have also damaged the Russian economy. The economic incentives to search for political compromise may have begun to take precedence over those who advocate a military solution.

Unfortunately, the wounds from this conflict are still too fresh, the dividing lines between combatants too inchoate, and the situation too fluid to predict any final peaceful resolution. Aggravating the search for a negotiated settlement is the presence of armed fighters on both sides who do not necessarily pay allegiance to any central authority. The excerpt from the Russian on-line newspaper, Gazeta.ru, describes some of the challenges in reestablishing command and control over these local and volunteer forces.

On the Ukrainian side, many of the independent (mostly volunteer) units had been loosely subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. There are now plans to transfer them to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, where they will become “permanent units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces,” and where presumably they will be better controlled. However, as the excerpt points out, the unstable domestic political situation in Ukraine will likely make this resubordination a difficult task. In the interim, there are fears that these poorly controlled armed groups may use their armed muscle to gain political or economic advantage in other areas of Ukraine.

The situation is nearly as perilous on the separatist side. Some of the local fighters who have fought for greater independence for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are now reluctant to lay down arms at the behest of the Russian Federation or regional leaders. The conflict has allowed many of these local

Source: Vladimir Dergachev and Anatoliy Azarenko, “Махновщина объединила Киев и Москву: Добровольцы стали мешать всем участникам конфликта на востоке Украины” [Makhnovism’ Unites Kyiv and Moscow: Volunteers Have Begun to Interfere with All Parties in Eastern Ukraine Conflict], Gazeta.ru, 11 November 2014. http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2014/11/11_a_6297669.shtml

Makhnovism’ Unites Kyiv and Moscow

Kyiv wants to subordinate all the volunteer detachments that have been involved in the conflict in eastern Ukraine to the Defense Ministry. We are seeing a parallel process of independent field commanders who are not under the control of the self-proclaimed republics’ authorities being driven out of the territory of the LNR [Luhansk People’s Republic] and DNR [Donetsk People’s Republic]. Each of these processes has its own political roots and its own internal logic, but they are united by the fact that, with the end of the active phase of the guerrilla war, volunteers are starting to get in the way of all the “big” players.

The volunteer detachments participating in the counterterrorist operation will become part of permanent units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, newly installed Minister of Defense Stepan Poltorak said. In the official’s words, the volunteers have played a significant role in the counterterrorist operation but the regime wants to have more influence over them in order to “plan their activity more precisely.”

Currently all the volunteer detachments are under the control of the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs], which is run by Arsen Avakov, a member of all the prime minister’s People’s Front. Petro Poroshenko would like to have the entire real security hierarchy attached to himself and to wrest control over the thousands of volunteers and their weapons from Avakov, Gazeta.ru’s sources in the People’s Front say.

Avakov himself disagrees with the presidential administration’s decision to resubordinate the volunteer battalions. He had previously said that these battalions’ fighters need to be found jobs in the MVD as “real patriots.”

Meanwhile, Kyiv Prosecutor Serhiy Yuldashev recently complained about the volunteers. In his words, members of the volunteer battalions pose a serious threat because they are coming to Kyiv with weapons and wandering around the city “armed to the teeth.”

Yuldashev urged the regime to “stop the makhnovism [a brand of anarchism named for early 20th-century Ukrainian revolutionary Nestor Makhno] on the streets of Kyiv” and stop weapons spreading beyond the borders of the “zone of military operations.”

Furthermore, Yuldashev is concerned about the activity of the well-known Aidar volunteer battalion. “I regard it as an internal threat. You would agree that they are unpredictable. They might even carry out a military coup,” the chief prosecutor of Kyiv said. “Any individual carrying a weapon from the counterterrorist operation zone is a criminal,” he stressed....

...New Donetsk Oblast Governor Oleksandr Kikhtenko also talked recently about

(continued)

Containing: Gaining Leverage in Eastern Ukraine

combatants a chance to escape the grim social conditions and to improve their economic prospects. As the excerpt points out, “Moscow is afraid of the emergence in the Donbass of ‘little Yanukovyches with their own little kingdoms,’ the decentralization of the DNR [Donetsk People’s Republic] and LNR [Luhansk People’s Republic], and their disintegration into ‘fiefdoms.’” The Kremlin, which continues to deny any official involvement in this conflict, is now faced with the quandary of subordinating these fighters while maintaining its unofficial stance of supporting an independent Novorossiya.

*The article concludes on a pessimistic note, pointing out that even with the “departure of uncontrolled field commanders and volunteers,” it is premature to talk of de-escalation. The leadership in Kiev and Moscow may be able to reach some form of political compromise, but their mandates may not stretch to all areas of Eastern Ukraine. For the past eight months the dogs of war have been running loose in Eastern Ukraine, and, as this article suggests, returning them to their respective cages will not be an easy task. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

battalions that are “out of control.” “I know what problems are being created in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts by those volunteer subunits that have unfortunately gotten out of control today. This is an issue that is real and exists. An operation is currently being carried out to bring these people back and put them in handcuffs,” the official complained.

Scandals involving volunteers returning from the counterterrorist operation zone are indeed increasing all the time....

...Ihor Mosiychuk, former deputy commander of the Azov Battalion, admits that a significant proportion of fighters are already leaving the front but at the same time are in no hurry to surrender their weapons to the authorities. ...In Poroshenko’s opinion, the battalions pose a threat to the state, while Avakov is proposing that their activity should continue to be encouraged.

The fate of the volunteer detachments is obviously just small change in the power struggle within the local elite. And nobody is currently venturing to predict how it will end.

Meanwhile processes that are similar in terms of their origins and essence but differ in terms of important details are also taking place in eastern Ukraine -- on the territories controlled by the self-proclaimed people’s republics....

...”They have done their job. They were given a mandate and it is now being taken away; without Moscow they would have neither resources nor popularity. They are not now needed in the republics and are being recalled to Russia for ‘consultations.’ Their work was largely based on our resources,” the source stresses. “Their ambitions are too great, they are receiving too much media publicity, and they are not suitable for incorporating into the military hierarchy or for high-ranking posts.”...

...Another source -- an authoritative figure among the Ukrainian separatists -- told Gazeta.ru that Moscow is afraid of the emergence in the Donbass of “little

Yanukovyches with their own little kingdoms,” the decentralization of the DNR and LNR, and their disintegration into “fiefdoms.”...

Militia member Aleksandr Zhuchkovskiy, coordinator of non-humanitarian assistance to the DNR, feels that independent field commanders are currently a headache for all parties to the conflict -- Moscow, Kyiv, and the authorities in the people’s republics.... “The Russian Federation has indeed put some commanders ‘on the payroll’ -- and this is a fairly tangible instrument for controlling and influencing them. But it does not mean that the commanders are indebted to the Russian Federation for all of their status, authority, and so forth. They are not approaching the Russian military and politicians for assistance; rather people from the Russian Federation with “supervisory functions” are going to them (because of their popularity and, as a consequence, independence).

Aleksey Makarkin, deputy director of the Political Technologies Center, agrees with that the withdrawal of volunteers from the Donbass is linked to the uncontrollability of “private initiatives.” Thus, National Guard commanders have repeatedly threatened to march on Kyiv unless the authorities carry out military reforms. On the other hand, many field commanders in the Donbass are still totally dependent on Donetsk and Luhansk. ...

...The political analyst also added that for quite a long time there was a widespread view that the intensity of the confrontation would lessen with the departure of uncontrolled field commanders and volunteers. But in practice it is premature to expect a de-escalation: “Russia and Ukraine do not have a clear mutual understanding about peace terms, the contact between the two countries is shaky, and constant trials of strength are taking place. It is not a given that the departure of the volunteers will lead to a de-escalation.”

Marines in Russia's Northern Fleet will Increase in December 28 November 2014

“TASS reports that the 61st Independent Red Banner Naval Infantry Regiment – also called the Kirkenes Regiment because of the unit’s participation in the liberation of Eastern Finnmark in October 1944, will be expanded and reorganized into a brigade before the end of the year.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The 61st Naval Infantry Brigade is stationed near the Russian city of Pechenga (formerly the Finnish city of Petsamo). The unit’s combat history includes combat in the Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation, the largest land battle fought north of the Arctic Circle. The December expansion of the 61st Naval Infantry Regiment to a brigade will bring the total of Russian Arctic brigades facing Norway to three, the other two being the 200th Separate Motorized Infantry Brigade based in Pechenga (Murmansk Oblast) and the 80th Separate Motorized Infantry Brigade in the Alakurti settlement (Murmansk Oblast).*

*The units are all undergoing expansion and training to prepare them for Arctic missions. Naval infantry, army and airborne forces exercise together in the Arctic. This September, airborne troops of the 83rd Separate Airborne Assault Brigade and the Pacific Fleet’s 155th Separate Naval Infantry Brigade conducted a joint airborne /amphibious landing on the Arctic’s Wrangel Island. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)***

Source: Trude Pettersen, Barents Observer, <http://barentsobserver.com>, 28 November 2014

More Naval Infantry to Northern Fleet

According to Russia’s Ministry of Defense, the 61st Naval Infantry Brigade will get a new sniper company, and already existing units will become larger. The brigade is located in Camp Sputnik near Pechenga, not far from the border with Norway. The change is part of a larger operational reorganization of Russian military forces in the North. On December 1 the Northern Fleet becomes the base of a new United Strategic Command, which will defend Russia’s interests in the Arctic. The United Strategic Command (Obedinyonnoye strategicheskoye kommandovaniye, OSK) “Sever” will consist of the Northern Fleet and units of other military branches located in the northern parts of the country. This will include the 200th. Motorized Infantry Brigade based in Pechenga close to the border with Norway. This unit became part of the Northern Fleet in December 2012. Newly formed units on Novaya Zemlya, the New Siberian Islands and Franz Josef Land will also be part of OSK “Sever”.

The naval infantry regiment in Pechenga was established in 1943. It became part of the Northern Fleet in 1966. In 1980 the unit was reorganized into a brigade, and remained a brigade until 2009, when it became a regiment again. Soldiers in the Northern Fleet’s Naval Infantry are considered to be among the best in Russia, and have taken part in several military operations in Soviet times and in the Caucasus in the 1990s.

A Spark in the Finnmark?

5 December 2014

“This week some 60 officers gathered at the Porsanger garrison in Western Finnmark to plan exercise Joint Viking, which starts on March 9 next year. 5000 soldiers from all branches of Norway’s Armed Forces will take part in the drills that will be held between Alta and Lakseelv in Western Finnmark, the bordering county to Russia.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Finnmark is the farthest northern and eastern county in Norway, bordering Russia on the East and Finland on the South. The Norwegian city of Kirkenes, site of the largest land battle in the Arctic during World War II, is 225 kilometers from the Russian port city of Murmansk. The Norwegians have announced that they will conduct an exercise in the Norwegian north during the early spring in order to test their ability to shift forces to the North and to exercise interoperability among their army, navy and air force. While the size of the exercise (5,000 personnel) does not threaten the far-larger Russian force stationed on the Murmansk peninsula, the idea of a military exercise close to Russia’s borders may draw protests from Moscow. Norway is part of NATO, and while this is not billed as a NATO exercise, it is sure to draw the attention of the Russian military. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)***

Source: Trude Pettersen, Barents Observer, <http://barentsobserver.com>, 5 December 2014

Norway plans its largest military exercise in Finnmark

The choice of Finnmark as the location for the exercise is a coincidence and has nothing to do with Norway’s relations to Russia, stated Lars Petter Kolle of the Norwegian Joint Headquarters to the Norwegian Broadcasting System (NRK). “We want to show our presence in the whole of Norway. We were in Hordaland last autumn and now it is Western Finnmark’s turn.” The idea behind the exercise is to train in moving to Finnmark quickly and to have units from Air Force, Navy, and ground-based forces work together within a short period of time. Kolle believes the biggest challenge with having the exercise in Finnmark will be the large distances and unfamiliar terrain. It is not clear whether allied forces will take part in the exercise, but there is an opening for this. Russia has not notified Norway if they want to send inspectors to the exercise, but they can if they want

To conduct a military exercise in Finnmark is a clear sign that one wants to send a political signal to Russia, says Paal S. Hilde, Associate Professor at the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies. “One wants to show the world, and of course our neighbor in the East, that NATO is present and that NATO is both relevant and able to defend Norway if it should become necessary.” Hilde believes the exercise shows that the caution from the Cold War is over and that the exercise will draw attention

in Russia. “It might be perceived as provocative.” During the Cold War, Norway declared that no NATO exercises would take part in Finnmark. This was one of several measures Norway took to keep tensions with the neighboring Soviet Union at a low level.

There have not been any exercises including NATO-soldiers in Finnmark after the fall of the Soviet Union. But some NATO-countries like Germany and Great Britain use the Porsanger garrison as a training center for winter operations.

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“Following the establishment of a Ministry of the Crimea, the Ministry of the North Caucasus and the Ministry of the Far East, the turn appears to have come to the North. A representatives of the Russian presidential administration confirms that the establishment of the ministry now is on the agenda.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian shift from an elected governor to a federal ministry, where the federal government retains tight control, follows a pattern of the Putin administration. The traditional oblasts and rayons (states and regions) retain their local governance, but the “special cases” which may require military rapid response (Crimea and the Northern Caucasus) or responsive control of sparsely populated, yet vital areas containing significant military forces (Far East and Arctic) are held under Moscow’s control. This is a reversion to the 1932-1936 period of the Soviet Union, when everything in the Arctic was governed by Glavsevmorput (Main Administration of the North Sea Route) – a socialist counterpart to the British East India Company. It controlled over two million square miles of the Soviet Union and its rule extended over culture, commerce, scientific exploration and administration. In the words of Joseph Stalin, “The Arctic and our northern region contain colossal wealth. We must create a Soviet organization which can, in the shortest period possible, include this wealth in the general resources of our socialist economic structure.” Glavsevmorput captured the popular imagination but was never particularly efficient and ran afoul of another group that occupied part of the Arctic, but was not under Glavsevmorput’s control—the NKVD, forerunner of the KGB.*

Source: Atle Staalesen, Barents Observer, <http://barentsobserver.com>, 20 November 2014.

A new ministry will help centralize Arctic developments. Governors’ elections will be abolished and the governance of Arctic territories is likely to be transferred to a new Ministry of the Arctic.

“This is a strategically important region for the country, [and] a structure which can centralize all operations is absolutely needed”, the representative stated to Kommersant newspaper. A list of leader candidates for the new structure is now being drafted and the issue will soon be handed over to the government. Among the possible candidates for the job is Dmitry Kobylkin, current head of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, as well as presidential adviser Artur Chilingarov. Chilingarov announced his readiness to head the new structure during the RBCTV program, “Murmansk Business Week”. The discussions over the new structure comes as the regional parliaments of three Arctic regions decided to abolish direct elections of governors. The regions, all of them autonomous okrugs, will be governed from now on by leaders indirectly appointed by Moscow.

Over the last few years, the Kremlin has established several territorial-dedicated ministries, the latest of them in May following developments in the Crimea. However, unlike the other new ministries, a ministry on the Arctic would include far bigger territories and far less people. If established, it would be responsible for developments stretching from the Barents Sea in the west to the Bering Strait in the east.

*The NKVD ran the prison camps, which expanded rapidly during the Stalinist purges. The prisoners played an important, if often terminal role, mining for gold and cutting timber for export. Dalstroi, the NKVD organization for these northern camps, extended the purges into Glavsevmorput and wrested control of the north, a position they held throughout the rest of Stalin’s reign. Kremlin watchers may want to observe how long the Federal Ministry of the Far North and Arctic remains in control and whether the FSB (successor to the KGB) makes any inroads into dominating this extensive territory. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)***

“It must be said that today in many cases cyber espionage is more effective than classical [espionage] that uses agent conspiracies. We have to agree, that it is unlikely that any kind of foreign James Bond would be able to penetrate into the structure of another state so deeply as to have the capability to steal an entire secret archive.”

Source: Sergey Ptichkin, interview with Igor Sheremet, “Russia is Creating a Unified System to Repel Cyber-Attacks,” Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 21 November 2014.

OE Watch Commentary: *Russia’s Federal Security Service is creating a state system to detect cyber attacks, according to an interview with Igor Sheremet, Chairman of the government’s Military Industrial Commission Council for Automated Control Systems, Communications, Intelligence and Radio Electronic Warfare, and Information Warfare. The system is designated as the State System for Detecting and Warning of Computer Attack. One of the main reasons for the system’s development is to create the ability to find concealed implants in various carriers and technical systems, hidden, according to Sheremet, to make systems malfunction. As is well known, developing detection devices requires time and expensive systems.*

The system will work to defend the parts of the Internet that support the organization of executive authority and the state mass media in Russia. Sheremet stated that he does not favor limiting access to the Internet or shutting it down completely. End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)

A harsh struggle, which in scale is indeed a cyber-war, has been unleashed in the world’s cyberspace. Its motto is: “He who controls the information, controls the world.” The casualties in such wars are multibillion [ruble] losses, disclosed state secrets, and threats to the viability of strategically important facilities, i.e., the security of the state.

To combat these threats a draft federal law is being prepared in the RF [Russian Federation] Government which will aid systemic defenses in the cyber wars. In an exclusive interview with Rossiyskaya Gazeta, one of the coauthors of this draft law discusses how new technologies will become the weaponry in this war. He is Igor Sheremet, Chairman of the government’s Military Industrial Commission Council.

[Sheremet] Under the leadership of the Federal Security Service work is already being actively conducted to create a state system for detecting and warning of computer attacks. Such a task was assigned by a decree of the President of Russia two years ago. Few know that thanks precisely to this system in 2013 alone three large agent cyber networks of foreign countries were exposed, which prevented the theft of two million pages of secret information.

[Sheremet] Russia has the capability to emerge in a leadership position in several initiatives. This primarily concerns quantum computing and quantum communications. It should be noted that quantum communications is characterized by absolute intelligence protection. In principle it is impossible to intercept a quantum information stream. And quantum computers are a means for solving tasks associated with massive enumeration of possibilities at speeds unattainable by traditional computers. I will offer this example. The famous cryptanalysis task of factoring a

whole number into simple multiplicands for the case of a 250-digit number may be solved in a single year by the American Titan Cray XK7 supercomputer having an operational speed of about 20 petaflops. While with a quantum computer having a speed of only one megahertz this will take four seconds. For a 1,000-digit number the corresponding relationship consists of hundreds of billions of years and 1.5 minutes, respectively. Just think: hundreds of billions of years of computations or a minute and a half! Although, unquestionably, the creation of such computers requires very serious efforts and investments. However, I repeat, we are fully able to do this and to become the first. We just need to work.

Russian Aerospace Force Expansion

29 November 2014

“Special attention is being given to restoring the VKO Troops grouping on Crimean Federal District territory. Crimea’s geographic location provides great advantages for accomplishing space surveillance and spacecraft control missions.”

Source: Anna Potekhina, interview with Lieutenant-General Aleksandr Golovko, “1 December—Aerospace Defense Troops Formation Day,” Krasnaya Zvezda Online, 29 November 2014.

OE Watch Commentary: Lieutenant-General Aleksandr Golovko, Commander of Russia’s Aerospace Defense Troops, was interviewed by Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) on Aerospace Troop Day. He discussed the importance of the Crimean territory for installing missile attack warning systems and radars there. He also pointed out that the aerospace defense of the Arctic zone and the Northern Sea Route are priority missions for force groupings in Russia’s north. Finally, he commented on the new armaments that the aerospace forces are getting, to include the state-of-the-art Podlet-K1 radars and Fundament-M automation complexes. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

The infrastructure facilities, arms, and military equipment of Ukraine’s Sevastopol and Yevpatoriya centers had been reduced to a sorry state. This was one reason for rejecting use of data in the missile attack warning system from the Dnepr radar in Sevastopol. Restoring the infrastructure and rearming military units of the VKO Troops on the peninsula comprise our priority mission. This year measures are concluding for final activation of a separate control and telemetry complex in Yevpatoriya. The decision was made to restore the missile attack warning system. Work of a joint commission with industrial representatives currently has been organized for determining specific measures to extend the service life (technical life) of the radar in Sevastopol.

Organization of aerospace defense of the Russian Federation [RF] Arctic zone as a whole and of the Northern Sea Route in particular is a priority mission in deploying groupings of troops (forces) in the Arctic. The state is giving this matter great attention. Extensive work was done in this direction during 2013-2014. Subunits of the Radiotechnical Troops were deployed on islands of the Arctic Ocean and they went on air defense alert duty on 1 November.

Deployment of the first phase of Unified Space System development is envisaged beginning in 2015, which will permit building up capabilities for around-the-clock monitoring of missile threat areas. A new standard series [tiporyad] of advanced containerized radar equipment is being developed which will be possible to use both on sea as well as ground mobile platforms (including rail). The stage of developing working design documentation for their manufacture currently is under way. State-of-the-art models of Radiotechnical Troops military equipment capable of detecting airborne objects throughout the range of altitudes of alert-duty and combat modes continue to come into the Aerospace Defense Troops inventory. They include such radars (RLK’s [radar complexes]) as Podlet-K1, Gamma-M, and the Nebo series. In addition, one more regimental suite of the S-400 SAM system came to the Aerospace Defense Troops. At present there are more than 130 spacecraft for various purposes in the Russian orbital grouping.

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The Kremlin's Economic Checkmate Maneuver

“We already see that more and more countries are looking for ways to become less dependent on the dollar and are setting up alternative financial and payments systems and reserve currencies. I think that our American friends are quite simply cutting the branch they are sitting on. You cannot mix politics and the economy, but this is what is happening now. I have always thought and still think today that politically motivated sanctions were a mistake that will harm everyone, but I am sure that we will come back to this subject later.”

- President Vladimir Putin¹

Introduction

Much has been written over the past ten months describing how Russian security forces were able to surreptitiously infiltrate and then seize key locations on the Crimean peninsula, which ultimately led to the region's annexation in March 2014. While the world's attention was directed at the political instability in the capital of Ukraine, the Kremlin leadership was able to avoid direct confrontation with the new pro-Western government in Kiev, and instead quietly invaded and appropriated property for which it claimed prior ownership. The quasi-clandestine Crimean annexation illustrates that not only is the current Kremlin leadership willing to use force to reach its objectives, but it is also willing to employ the tools of power in novel and unexpected ways.

The West responded to this not-so covert aggression with both political and economic measures. Russia's membership in the G8 was annulled and a series of increasingly painful economic sanctions have been levied upon key individuals and industries in an attempt to force Russia to renounce its claims in Crimea and discontinue its support for separatists in SE Ukraine. While it remains unclear whether these measures have had any actual effect on limiting or changing the Kremlin's strategy in Ukraine, the Russian leadership has undertaken its own retaliatory measures. Besides restricting European and US agricultural imports, the Kremlin has redoubled its efforts in attacking what it perceives as the Achilles heel of American leadership: US financial indebtedness. This brief essay will examine the Kremlin's strategy to weaken faith in the US economy and to unseat the dollar as the global reserve currency.

Background

For a number of reasons, by the time WW II ended the US dollar had become the primary global reserve currency. For the past 75 years, this “exorbitant privilege” has allowed the United States to enjoy considerable influence over the global economy.² With the creation of various credit instruments, the Federal Reserve has been able to sell US debt obligations to both foreign and domestic customers, without a corresponding increase in US goods and services. How the dollar became the global reserve currency is beyond the scope of this paper, but once the US decided to abrogate the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1971 (which had tied the dollar to gold reserves), the amount of dollars in circulation was no longer tied to a specific commodity. As long as others were prepared to buy US dollar debt, the Federal Reserve could continue to print currency.

From Moscow's perspective, the ability of the US to control the global money supply has been especially galling. In the Russian narrative the dollar ascended to become the global reserve currency as a result of the sacrifice of millions of dead Russians during the Great Patriotic War (WW II). They argue that the Americans took advantage of the war-torn European economy to unseat the British pound from the seat of global reserve currency. Since the ruble was confined to the Soviet autarchic economy, the Kremlin had little say in the dollar's ascent. Regardless, many pro-Kremlin economists and pundits argue today that, had not the Soviet military defeated the Nazi threat, the Western, dollar-based global economic system would have never been built.³

Today's Kremlin leadership draws upon many Cold War stereotypes in formulating the Russian attitude toward the US-dollar-based global economic system. The fat, cigar-smoking capitalist banker who wantonly exploits the labor of the planet's poor workers features prominently within much of the current Kremlin-sponsored anti-US propaganda. Russian

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Continued: The Kremlin's Economic Checkmate Maneuver

commentators point out that the US, with only about 5% of the world's population, consumes more than 20% of its resources.⁴ They go on to explain that this rampant consumption is predicated upon a crooked economic scheme, whereby indebted US consumers buy global products from poorer countries with mere dollar-denominated paper. In the Kremlin calculations the grandchildren of those same fat American capitalistic bankers from the last century are exploiting poorer and weaker countries today to maintain the dollar-based global economy.

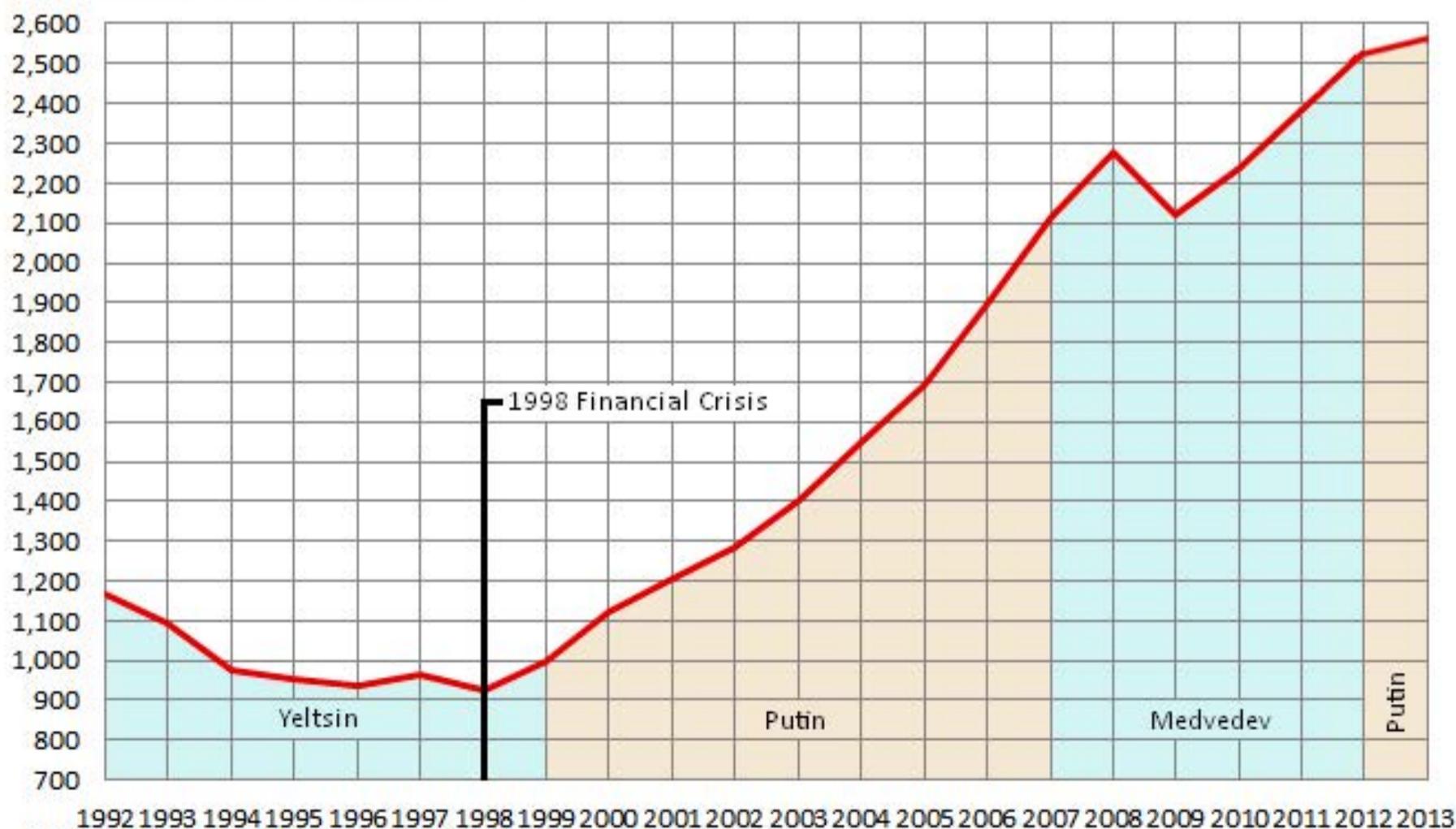
This negative stereotype of the US as the callous global banker has been hammered home over the past decade. In the Kremlin's economic history the 1990s was a wild decade when the US took every advantage of Russian economic, political and military weakness after it threw off the shackles of Communism. More importantly, according to the Kremlin's rendition, the US was largely responsible for Russia's post-Soviet economic collapse, scheming to develop the privatization program which helped to bankrupt the country.⁵ In the popular imagination much of Russia's wealth was stolen and shipped to the West in clever, American-sponsored economic schemes.

The economic pain felt by most Russians during the 1990s was anything but imaginary. A large percentage of the Russian population suffered acute economic hardship, and the trauma of watching their ruble savings evaporate against the dollar shapes how many Russians perceive the dollar-based global economy today.

This negative portrayal of the US economic system aligns well with the overall adverse depiction of America in Russia today. While perceived economic injustice is a primary factor, there are a number of other resentments which feed this anti-Americanism. For the past few years the US has been portrayed as the primary source of much of the world's instability. According to Kremlin-sponsored pundits, the US deliberately sows unrest (often under the guise of liberal democracy

Russian GDP (PPP) Since Fall of Soviet Union

Billions of International Dollars (2013)



Source: International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org>)

Russian Economy since the Fall of the Soviet Union. Source: www.imf.org

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Continued: The Kremlin's Economic Checkmate Maneuver

promotion) to maintain its global hegemony.⁶ After the end of the Cold War, the US assumed the role of the “indispensable nation,” disregarding the global security structures built after WW II. Most importantly, because it controls the global money supply, Washington is able to convert its economic advantage into sheer military power. The Kremlin leadership often points out the wide discrepancy between how much the US spends on military expenses, compared to the rest of the world. They see a direct nexus between dominant US military power and the status of dollar as the global reserve currency.

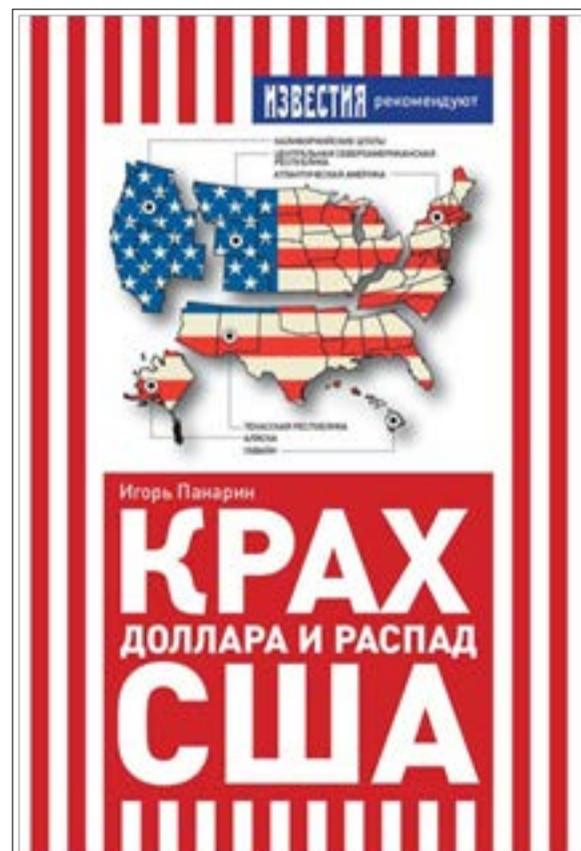
Russia's Strategy

A key element in the Kremlin's overall anti-American strategy is to weaken worldwide faith in the US dollar as the global reserve currency. According to the Kremlin's logic, unseating the dollar as the reserve currency will force Washington to live within its fiscal limits, which will, in turn, force the US to reduce defense spending. This reduced US global military presence will then allow other regional powers (like Russia) the opportunity to dominate what it maintains is its legitimate sphere of interest. Some Russian geopolitical thinkers claim that the resulting multipolar system of global governance will be inherently more stable, as each major power will be more inclined to maintain a peaceful balance of power.

To achieve its goal of reducing faith in the dollar, the Russian leadership has adopted a multivector approach, employing information, policy and energy tools. Its strategy is fueled not only by the sense of humiliation from the impoverished 1990s, but also a deep and residing resentment toward the US as the corrupt global banker. While advocating market capitalism today, the current Kremlin leadership retains certain Marxist beliefs, chief of which is that economics is the basis of all society. It maintains that if war is an extension of politics, then economics is the superstructure upon which politics operate and wars take place. If the Kremlin can succeed in reducing American economic power, it will also diminish US political and military strength.

The Kremlin has employed its full information arsenal to spread its anti-dollar message. Over the past decade it has produced (by conservative estimates) no fewer than two dozen hour-long television documentaries and a number of other special films which explain in elaborate detail the injustices of the dollar-based global reserve currency and why this system is on the verge of collapse. A sampling of the titles reveals the content of these works: *The Great American Bubble*, *The Worthless Dollar*, *How the US Federal Reserve Makes Money out of Nothing*, *End of the American Dollar*, and others.⁷

In addition to feature films, the Kremlin has enlisted a battalion of economic and political specialists to echo and amplify its anti-dollar message during daily news and information programs. These “experts” are featured prominently within both traditional media (TV, radio and newspapers) and new Internet media. The list is long and includes such luminaries as N. Starikov, M. Khazin, E. Federov, I. Panarin and S. Glazyev. Besides their media presentations, these experts have produced numerous articles, videos and books on the same topic, with equally ominous titles (e.g., *Collapse of the Dollar*, *The Fall of the USA*, *Saving the Dollar via War*, etc.).⁸ While these professional propagandists have been delivering their anti-US message for nearly a decade, since Putin's return



I. Panarin and his book, "Collapse of the Dollar and the Fall of the USA. Source: Wikimedia Commons

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to the presidency in 2012 they have moved from the fringe to center-stage, with all the appropriate media exposure and funding.

Among these economic experts, Sergei Glazyev has become one of the more prominent and outspoken proponents of creating a new global currency. Born in 1961, he studied economics and left academia just when the USSR was falling apart. He worked as an economic advisor during the early Yeltsin administration, but departed in 1993 to pursue a political career. He served in the Russian Duma from 1993-2007 under various nationalist parties, where he formed an alliance of sorts with Dmitry Rogozin. It may have been at Rogozin's urging that Glazyev was appointed by Putin in July 2012 to work on customs and economic issues. He has used his official position to serve as a barometer for the hawkish and conservative elements within the Kremlin. To get a flavor of his sentiments, consider this paragraph from an article he wrote in September, 2014:

U.S. actions in Ukraine should be classified not only as hostile with regard to Russia, but also as targeting global destabilization. The U.S. is essentially provoking an international conflict to salvage its geopolitical, financial, and economic authority. The response must be systemic and comprehensive, aimed at exposing and ending U.S. political domination, and, most importantly, at undermining U.S. military-political power based on the printing of dollars as a global currency.

This anti-dollar message is no longer confined to the Russian-speaking world. Since the advent of the *Russian Today* (RT) foreign-language TV programming in 2005, the Kremlin has been able to spread this message among a much wider audience.¹⁰ The overall weakness of the US economy and the impending collapse of the dollar is one of RT's favorite themes and is highlighted in many of its news and analytical programs. This topic is a primary focus during two of its more popular weekly programs (*The Kaiser Report* and *Boom Bust*).¹¹ RT also serves as an influential platform for those American pundits and experts who preach the same anti-dollar message and impending collapse of the US economy.¹²

When employing its mass information arsenal, the Kremlin leadership is less concerned with rational argument than on casting doubt on the strength of the US economy. It gladly and loudly reports on every piece of negative US economic news, while simultaneously spinning elaborate conspiracy theories to support its anti-dollar message. According to the Kremlin's narrative, American leaders will use the most nefarious weapons to maintain the dollar's supremacy. For instance, after the serious economic travails of 2007-08, when some global investors were looking to the Euro as safer reserve currency, the Kremlin-sponsored media reported that Washington caused credit problems in some of the weaker EU countries to discredit the Euro.¹³ When Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the former head of the IMF, began to lobby hard for a new international reserve currency in 2011, Russian media reports suggested that he was set up in an elaborate sting operation which forced him to resign.¹⁴ The Kremlin has perfected the skill of mixing truth, innuendo and falsehood into an entertaining and toxic production to transmit its anti-dollar message.

Besides its propaganda arsenal, the Kremlin has also undertaken concrete policy actions to weaken the dollar as the global reserve currency. Its most important initiative has been the formation and strengthening of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) economic alliance. Since its founding summit in Yekaterinburg in 2009, one of the primary objectives of this organization has been to develop and advocate a new global reserve currency to replace the dollar. The Kremlin has been at the forefront of this initiative, and at the last summit in 2014, member countries agreed to create a rival development bank to the IMF. They also discussed mutual trade relations in their local currencies, bypassing the dollar system.¹⁵



Russian politician and economist Sergey Glazyev. Source: Wikimedia Commons

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BRICS leaders-Brazil 2014. Source: Wikimedia Commons

On the practical level, in the past couple of years Russia has moved to decrease the amount of dollar-denominated assets held by its central bank. It has also enacted legislation designed to limit its citizens from holding property or foreign bank accounts and has encouraged oligarchs to repatriate their dollar assets back to Russia and exchange them for rubles.¹⁶

Finally, as an energy powerhouse Russia has continued to take steps to delink its oil and gas exports from the dollar, insisting instead on trading in local currencies. For instance, while the recent massive (\$300 billion) oil and gas trade deal with China was denominated in dollars for the media, it was later revealed that Russian oil firms will be paid in Chinese currency (the renminbi or yuan).¹⁷ A similar deal has recently been worked out with Iran. The Russian leadership believes that to weaken faith in the American currency, it must somehow delink the price of oil from the dollar.¹⁸

Conclusion

As of November 2014 President Putin continues to enjoy unprecedented public support. The overwhelming majority of Russians approve of his policies, to include Russian actions vis-à-vis Ukraine. That this support may be largely predicated on the Kremlin's control over the national media is noteworthy, but does not diminish the fact that many Russians sincerely believe this narrative and the justness of the Russian cause.

For some of the hardliners within the Kremlin, US-led Western economic sanctions in response to Russian military involvement in Ukraine are merely a preliminary step to overt military aggression. They argue that these economic attacks are designed to weaken the country's defenses by fomenting internal dissent against the Kremlin. These Putin supporters, who both are fed and contribute to the Kremlin propaganda regarding Ukraine, have advocated employing similar economic weapons against the US, even if the Russian people have to sacrifice material comforts. Destructing the dollar-based global economic model will certainly have a negative impact upon Russia, yet the Kremlin leadership has proven itself to be extremely adept at blaming the country's economic hardship on the aggressive policies of the US.

The lack of a viable alternative to the dollar-based global currency has been the chief obstacle to realizing the Kremlin's economic onslaught against the dollar. Global faith in the ruble remains abysmal, while both the Euro and Chinese dollar have their own systemic weaknesses which preclude them from displacing the dollar. Moreover, Russia's message regarding the weakness of the dollar-based global economy might find a more receptive audience if the Kremlin had a reputa-

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tion for fiscal rectitude and economic competence. Unfortunately for the Kremlin leadership, its anti-dollar message is diluted by its own endemic corruption and economic mismanagement. While there has been no shortage of official claims and campaigns designed to eradicate corruption, the Russian economic system remains riddled with fraud, abuse and deceit. Regardless of the veracity of the Kremlin's argument regarding the indebtedness of the US and the perils of holding large dollar reserves, central banks and financiers still prefer to invest their money in a law-based state.

The current Kremlin leadership appears increasingly willing to go further in playing economic hardball. Given their tremendous domestic energy resources, the Putin government will likely redouble its efforts to delink the price of oil from the dollar in an attempt to force the creation of a new global reserve currency. Kremlin motives may be driven less by rational decision-making and more by a desire to enact revenge against what they consider to be an unlevel economic playing field. In trying to understand the Kremlin's motive, one might recall the Russian fairy tale, where, when the peasant is given a wish to become as rich as his neighbor, the Russian peasant requests instead that his neighbor be deprived of his possessions.

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Endnotes

1. Vladimir Putin, "Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club," Kremlin.ru, 24 October 2014. <http://kremlin.ru/news/46860>
2. Barry Eichengreen, *Exorbitant Privilege: The Rise and Fall of the Dollar and the Future of the International Monetary System*, Oxford University Press; 2011. For a brief book review, see: <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Book-Review-5-May-2012.pdf>
3. One popular Russian pundit, Nikolai Starikov has created a complete modern global history, where the US plays the role of primary villain. According to Starikov, the US planned the collapse of the USSR, and since then has maintained a controlling presence within the Kremlin, primarily through its economic (dollar) influence. A few years ago, the rants and writings of Starikov were popular only on the fringe in Russia. Today, he has become a very popular unofficial spokesperson for the Kremlin. Besides his frequent appearances on TV and radio, Starikov maintains a robust Internet presence. See, for instance, his blog: <http://nstarikov.ru/> For Starikov's explanation as to how the dollar became the global reserve currency, see his book: *Ruble Nationalization – the Way to Russia's Freedom*, Piter Press, 2007.
4. That the US consumes more than its fair share of global resources is a favorite theme of pro-Kremlin commentators, such as M. Leontyev, A. Dugin, N. Starikov, A. Prokhanov, etc... One of the more outspoken Duma Deputies, Yevgeny Fyodorov, has developed a global theory and modern history which claims that the US has "colonized" the entire world (to include Russia) to maintain its disproportionate claim to resources. See: http://vk.com/efedorov_club or <http://efedorov.ru/> or http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yevgeny_Alexeyevich_Fyodorov
5. This is a major point in the current Kremlin anti-American trope. See, for instance: Rogozin, Dmitrii. *LAstreby Mira: Dnevnik Russkogo Posla*. Moskva: Al'pina Non-fikshn, 2010. There is no questioning that the US played a key role in developing plans to restructure the Soviet command economy into something more market-oriented. That the experiment turned out so poorly had many causes, but according to the research done by this author, "impoverishing" or "weakening" Russia was never an objective of US policy.
6. In the current prevalent Kremlin realpolitik propaganda, "democracy" is a mere façade for US big business, elite interests. Thus, according to the Kremlin's calculus, the various "color" revolutions of the past decade had little or nothing with advancing the cause of democracy in places like Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Egypt, etc..., but rather spreading chaos so the US can maintain its global dominance. For an example of how the Kremlin transmits this message to its people, see for instance the video at the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhN7karyrtg&index=2&list=PLA884F3D85B86B355>
7. The belief that the US dollar and the American economy will soon collapse has become a most popular genre in the Russian media over the past decade. Below are links to a mere sampling of these programs/films. There are many, many more. <http://www.1tv.ru/documentary/fi7380/sn1/fd201201141200>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiVAWWXugg0>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewoewpd_MJY
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRSiAPCjm7o>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YWtEGaZ8OU
8. Unfortunately (or not) many of these authors have not been translated into English. For one that has, see: Igor Panarin, *The Crash of the Dollar and the Disintegration of the USA*, Hotline – Telecom, 2009.
9. Sergei Glazyev, "The Threat of War and the Russian Response," *Russia in Global Affairs*, September 2014. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The-Threat-of-War-and-the-Russian-Response-16988>
10. According to the RT website (<http://rt.com/about-us/distribution/>) "RT's signal is carried by 22 satellites and over 230 operators, which allows some 644 million people to watch the channel in more than 100 countries." For a recent example of their expanding media reach, see: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/22/opinion/russia-today-argentina-tomorrow.html?_r=0
11. RT links: <http://rt.com/shows/keiser-report/> <http://rt.com/shows/boom-bust/>
12. RT has no problem finding western experts to get this message across. Recent guests have included: Jim Rickards – author of *The Death of Money*, Jim Sinclair, and Jim Rogers.
13. *There may be a direct correlation between the growth of conspiracy theories and the lack of transparency within the Russian government. For an apt example of cleverly assigning all negative blame on the US, and how it schemes to undermine other currencies, see: <http://www.1tv.ru/prj/sudsami/vypusk/538>*

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14. In all fairness, Russians aren't the only ones who have claimed some sort of conspiracy behind this event. *For instance, see this Russian news report from 2011 which cites an article in the New York Review of Books.* (<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/dec/22/what-really-happened-dominique-strauss-kahn/>) "Американский журналист: Стросс-Кан пал жертвой заговора" [American Journalist: Strauss-Kahn was a victim of a Conspiracy] <http://www.vesti.ru/videos/show/vid/379647/cid/9/>
15. "On July 15,[2014] the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — the BRICS group of nations — announced the creation of the New Development Bank aimed at challenging the American-led global economic order." See: "A Challenge From the BRICS," *New York Times*, editorial, 23 July 2014. <http://nyti.ms/1luCTWB>
16. For instance, see: Patrick Jenkins and Daniel Schäfer, "Russian companies withdraw billions from west, say Moscow bankers," *Financial Times*, 14 March 2014. <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/ffea2660-ab9e-11e3-aad9-00144feab7de.html#axzz3HeCUirXZ>
17. Charles Wright, "\$400 Billion Gas Deal Shows Russia Looking To China To Replace Western Money," *Forbes.com*, 22 May 2014. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/chriswright/2014/05/22/400-billion-gas-deal-shows-russia-looking-to-china-to-replace-western-money/>
18. "Russia Prepares to Attack the Petrodollar," *Voice of Russia*, 4 April 2014. http://voiceofrussia.com/2014_04_04/Russia-prepares-to-attack-the-petrodollar-2335/