

Foreign Military Studies Office

# OEWATCH

FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



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رسول الله  
محمد

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# OEWATCH

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## The Turkish Military's New Leadership

5 August 2015

*“The command structure of the Turkish Armed Forces has been renewed at a time when fights have intensified against the PKK and ISIS, important security problems in Turkey’s region.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** The High Military Council of Turkey met in early August for its annual meeting and decided on the new high-level appointments and promotions. The most notable ones are General Hulusi Akar, the new Chief of the General Staff, and General Salih Zeki Çolak, the new Land Forces Commander. These important changes in the military’s ranks come at a time when Turkey faces attacks from both the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), making terror and security the highest priority in the country. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press introduce the new leaders, discuss their backgrounds and the threats they will have to deal with.

The first passage notes that the August meeting of the High Military Council took place during a period of intense developments in Turkey, which include a more active stance against ISIS, increased PKK terrorism, the stalling of the peace negotiations with the PKK; and turmoil in domestic politics following the 7 June elections. The second excerpted passage discusses the backgrounds of the two new leaders, noting that Akar is known to have good relations with the government and has experience serving in Istanbul and Ankara, in addition to Tunceli, a Kurdish-majority city in eastern Turkey. It also notes that Çolak, is well liked in the military and has extensive experience fighting terrorism. The third passage notes that in January 1915 then-Chief of Staff of the US Army General Ray Odierno awarded Akar the Pentagon’s ‘Legion of Merit’ for his outstanding contributions to NATO. Akar will serve a 4-year term until 2019. He takes over the post from General Özel, who had been serving as the Chief of the General Staff since 2011.

**End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya).**

**Source:** “Yeni Genelkurmay Başkanı Hulusi Akar” (The New Chief of the General Staff is Hulusi Akar), Milliyet.com.tr, 5 August 2015, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/komuta-kdemesinde-surpriz-yok-/siyaset/detay/2097539/default.htm>

*“The command structure of the Turkish Armed Forces has been renewed at a time when fights have intensified against the PKK and ISIS, important security problems in Turkey’s region. [The outgoing] Gen. Necdet Özel, who served during a problematic period due to the cases considered to be conspiracies against the military, and the problems that the Syrian civil war environment have posed to Turkey’s national security, will turn over his post in mid-August. The post of the Chief of the General Staff will be filled by Land Forces Commander Gen. Hulusi Akar. The August meeting of the High Military Council has gained a different dimension due to the renewed PKK terror, the stalling of the peace process, a more active approach against ISIS and the coalition negotiations following the elections.”*

**Source:** “TSK’da 2022’ye kadar planlama” (Plans out to 2022 in the Turkish Armed Forces), Milliyet.com.tr, 3 August 2015, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/tsk-da-2022-ye-kadar-planlama-gundem-2096826/>

*“Since 2002, Akar has served in Istanbul and Ankara. Aside from the two big cities, Akar’s last duty location as a Brigadier General were Tunceli [a Kurdish-majority city in Eastern Turkey] and then in Napoli. It was being noted that Akar has good relations with the government. The post of Land Forces Commander, which will be vacated by Akar, is expected to be filled by the First Army Commander Salih Zeki Çolak. Çolak who is known as being one of the most well-liked commanders in the Turkish Armed Forces had been promoted to General after his success in the 7th Army Corps Command, which is a critical Command in the fight against the PKK [Kurdistan Workers’ Party].”*



Turkey’s New Chief of the General Staff Gen. Hulusi Akar (L) and the new Land Forces Commander, Gen. Salih Zeki Çolak (R)

Source: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/tsk-da-2022-ye-kadar-planlama-gundem-2096826/>

**Source:** “Yeni Genelkurmay Başkanı Hulusi Akar kimdir?” (Who is Hulusi Akar, the New Chief of the General Staff?), Milliyet.com.tr, 5 August 2015, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yeni-genelkurmay-baskani-hulusi-gundem-2097629/>

*“Akar received the Pentagon’s ‘Legion of Merit’ medal at the Pentagon. The Pentagon, the U.S. Defense Department had declared that the medal was given to Gen. Akar due to his “outstanding contributions to NATO”. The person who placed the medal on him was the U.S. Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Raymond Odierno...”*

## Is the Peace Process Over?

15 August 2015

*“Despite numerous democratic and economic measures that the successive Turkish governments have taken to realize the reconciliation process, the PKK has refused to disarm. The reason is clear: The PKK sees disarmament as the end of its raison d’etre. Instead, it seeks new excuses to continue its terrorist activities.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** After approximately 2.5 years of relative calm thanks to peace negotiations between the government of Turkey and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), it appears that hostilities have resumed between them. Each side blames the other for the collapse of the cease-fire. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press demonstrate the impasse.

The resumption of hostilities appears to have been triggered by a 20 July suicide bombing by an ISIS militant in Suruç, a town near the Syrian border, which killed 34 pro-Kurdish activists and injured over 100. The PKK blamed the Turkish government, and three days later started assassinating Turkish policeman and soldiers and firing rockets at military posts. On 24 July the government conducted counterterrorism operations around the country. In addition, for the first time since 11 November the Turkish military started conducting airstrikes and artillery fire, targeting PKK locations in Qandil Mountain in northern Iraq. This sparked more retaliation from the PKK, and the situation now risks spiraling into full-scale conflict. In the past month the PKK has killed several members of the security forces almost daily.

The first passage, written by Ibrahim Kalin, the Turkish presidential spokesperson and former chief advisor to the president, argues in his column in the daily Sabah newspaper that the PKK is sabotaging the peace process because it sees disarmament as its raison d’etre. He explains in detail the events leading up to the 20 July attack and gives many examples of the PKK conducting attacks despite calls from its leader to disarm. The second passage, by journalist Cengiz Çandar, also discusses the issue and notes the PKK officials’ position, saying that they blame the government for the collapse of the cease-fire and peace process. He quotes Murat Karayılan, the number 2 person in the PKK, as saying that, “... as long as the Turkish government cannot come up with new and serious proposals, the new situation that represents the end of the peace process cannot be radically different.”

Turkey has a painful history with the PKK separatist movement. In this conflict almost 40,000 lives have been lost over the last 30 years. Those killed in the Suruç attack were a group of young Kurdish students who were planning to go to Kobane to establish a park. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**



Aftermath of the Suruç bombing.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015\\_Suruç\\_bombing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_Suruç_bombing)

**Source:** Ibrahim Kalin, “Who really sabotaged the reconciliation process?” Milliyet.com.tr, 15 August 2015, <http://www.dailysabah.com/columns/ibrahim-kalin/2015/08/15/who-really-sabotaged-the-reconciliation-process>

*“Despite numerous democratic and economic measures that the successive Turkish governments have taken to realize the reconciliation process, the PKK has refused to disarm. The reason is clear: The PKK sees disarmament as the end of its raison d’etre. Instead, it seeks new excuses to continue its terrorist activities.”*

**Source:** Cengiz Çandar, “Is Ankara headed towards all-out war with the Kurds?” Al-Monitor.com, 7 August 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/08/turkey-united-states-kurds-pkk-peace-process.html>

*“Murat Karayılan, who is No. 2 in the PKK and the supreme commander of its forces, in a long interview with ANF defied the Turkish government and said, “If they want to destroy us through war, they are most welcome; we are ready for it.” He added, “As long as the Turkish government cannot come up with new and serious proposals, the new situation that represents the end of the peace process cannot be radically different.”*

## Patriot Missiles to Leave Turkey; Aegis to Support Turkey's Defense

19 August 2015

*“Following the declaration that the deployment period of the U.S. Patriot missile system (in southern Turkey) would not be renewed after October, attention turned to the U.S. Navy's ‘Aegis’ ships in the Eastern Mediterranean, which will be ‘permanently’ stationed to support Turkey's defense.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** Following the spillover effects of the Syrian crisis into Turkey, on 21 November 2012 Turkey had officially applied to NATO for the deployment of Patriot surface-to-air missile systems on its border with Syria; they were deployed in early February 2013. The Netherlands, Germany, and the United States provided the advanced PAC-3 model missiles that Turkey needed to intercept ballistic missiles; they were stationed about 60 miles north of the border. It has now been announced that the missiles will leave Turkey after October; Turkey's defense against ballistic missile threats will be handled by the Aegis ships to be permanently stationed in the Eastern Mediterranean, within the framework of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPPA), announced in 2009.

The accompanying passage from a Turkish news article discusses the issue, noting that attention has turned to the U.S. Navy's “Aegis” ships in the Eastern Mediterranean, which will be permanently stationed to support Turkey's defense. The article notes that these ships, which will be effective for Turkey's ballistic missile defense, will have SM-3 preventive missiles, which have a 3000-km operation trajectory and can destroy an enemy's ballistic missile heads. The piece also notes that, according to the EPPA, which the Obama administration announced in 2009, the Aegis BMD/SM-3 systems are now taking on the key role in European regional ballistic missile defense.

The EPPA entails a short-term/immediate goal to defend against threats from tactical and short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) and expands by phases, to protecting from medium (MRBMs) to intermediate-range missiles (IRBMs). This development represents Phase 2 of the EPPA, which foresees an upgrade of the technology on the Aegis ships in the Mediterranean and the addition of a land-based Aegis BMD (Aegis Ashore) system in Romania. These systems are planned to have the SM-3 interceptor Block IB, which will have more advanced sensors, expanding the defended area. SM-3 IB will also offer improved capability against maneuvering ballistic missiles or warheads. With Block IB, the Navy will gain the ability to defend against SRBMs, MRBMs, and some IRBMs. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

**Source:** “Patriotlar gidiyor Aegisler kalıyor” (The Patriots are leaving; the Aegis are staying), Takvim.com, 19 August 2015, <http://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2015/08/19/patriotlar-gidiyor-aegisler-kaliyor>

*“Following the declaration that the deployment period of the U.S. Patriot missile system (in southern Turkey) would not be renewed after October, attention turned to the U.S. Navy's ‘Aegis’ ships in the Eastern Mediterranean, which will be ‘permanently’ stationed to support Turkey's defense.*

*According to information that an Anatolian News Agency journalist compiled from Pentagon sources, the ‘Aegis’ ships which will be effective for Turkey's ballistic missile defense will have SM-3 preventive missiles which have a 3000 km operation trajectory, and can destroy an enemies ballistic missile heads....*

*According to the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPPA) which the Obama administration announced in 2009, the “Aegis BMD/SM-3” systems are now taking on the “key role” in European regional ballistic missile defense.*



Aegis BMD, SM-3, ship based missile system  
Source: Missile Defense Agency

# “Buffer Zone” Along Jordan’s Border Linked To Syrian Shelling

15 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** The violence from the civil war in Syria increasingly encroaches on the Jordanian border, particularly affecting towns such as Irbid and Ar Ramtha, where shells launched from Syria have killed one person and wounded six.

The accompanying excerpt from an article in *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* discusses Jordan’s recent deployment of one tank battalion to the border with Syria in order to increase security and surveillance. The article cites “reliable official sources in Amman” as placing the deployment in the context of the recent Syrian shelling and the prospect of a Jordanian assisted “safe area” in Iraq’s Anbar province or the Syrian governorate of Der’a. Elsewhere in the piece, the announcement of Jordan’s advanced border defense system and the recent arrest of dual Iraqi-Norwegian citizen Khaled al-Rabiyaey on charges of espionage are also discussed (see July 2015 OE Watch).

The accompanying excerpt from pro-government daily *Ad-Dustour* is authored by Mahir Abu-Tayr, a well connected yet occasional critical journalist. He outlines two possible Jordanian responses to the shelling from Syria: civilian evacuation from the border areas, or establishing a “buffer zone” inside Syria. He provides the pros and cons of each option, concluding that the buffer zone scenario promises greater security to Jordanian civilians.

It is unlikely a Jordanian-backed buffer zone will emerge in the near term. Many questions confront the proposal, including which troops would secure the zone, and how the zone would be negotiated with Syrian government troops, not to mention the Syrian regime’s air force. **End OE Watch Commentary (Beeny)**

*“Each time shells fired from Syria fall on Jordan no one knows whether they are fired by the Syrian Army or the opposition.”*

**Source:** Abu-Tayr, Mahir. “Scenariohan Urduniaan amam al-qatha’if as-suria” (Two Jordanian scenarios for Syrian shells), *Ad-Dustour*, 15 August 2015. <http://goo.gl/kDT6XO>.

## **Two Jordanian Scenarios for Syrian Shells**

*Each time shells fired from Syria fall on Jordan no one knows whether they are fired by the Syrian Army or the opposition. What is important is that these shells reach Jordan, sometimes causing injuries, damaging houses, and killing a citizen here or there. In this situation, the issuance of official statements to inform us about what happened is not enough. This situation could continue, and it should be evaluated in depth. In truth, Jordan faces one of two scenarios here. It can either moves its citizens living in areas adjacent to Syria to other sites, or set up a buffer zone inside Syrian territory to protect its citizens. We cannot wait for the deterioration of the security situation at the border. We must be prepared in advance for any development or deterioration, because the fall of shells on Jordan means we have actually become part of the Syrian ground battle, and this is dangerous although currently at a low level. The scenario of evacuating citizens is costly and difficult because the number of people is large, and no one knows where they can be evacuated to and whether there are funds to evacuate them. Will people accept any harm done to their lives and livelihoods? Does this scenario seem logical? The problem is that a large number of the people living in the area bordering Syria may prefer to leave for safe areas. But the official authorities which are currently “blamed,” will also be “blamed” in the event they decide to evacuate some areas, because people will complain about the new circumstances and perhaps the lack of fairness and any living losses to which they may be exposed. The second scenario for the establishment of a buffer zone is more sensitive, because it will also require the precautionary evacuation of people until the buffer zone is established, because the beginning of this scenario will lead to the intensification of military operations and perhaps an increase in the fall of shells. In this scenario the population is also under threat, but it more strategically protects and preserves them and their lives.*

**Source:** Bassam al-Badarin. “Dabaabaat urdunia fee waajib ‘hujumi’ li-ta’ziz hiraasaat al-hudud ... wa yaqaa’ ‘scenario at-tawasia’a fee al-Anbar wa Der’a yanmu” (Jordanian tanks on ‘offensive’ mission to increase border protection; cadence of the ‘expansion scenario’ in Anbar and Der’a grows), *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*. 8 July 2015. <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=369527>

## **Jordanian Tanks on ‘Offensive’ Mission to Increase Border Protection... Cadence of the ‘Expansion Scenario’ in Anbar and Der’a Grows**

*The military reinforcement operations that took place on Jordan’s border with Syria and Iraq during the past 48 hours cannot be viewed in isolation from the declared political decision of the Jordanian state, which is to prepare for all eventualities. That the reinforcement of border guards and the stepping-up of surveillance occurred suddenly and without warning or even “security developments,” indicates that the sovereign Jordanian institutions have information and data indicating the urgent need to reinforce military missions at the border points. Moves in the context of precautionary reinforcements do not signal “imminent danger,” so much as necessary precautions for open “regional” possibilities, as Al-Quds Al-Arabi understood directly from reliable official sources in Amman. Moreover, the launch of random shells on northern Jordanian cities from the Syrian side has increased. In the city of Ar Ramtha one person was killed and six people were wounded by one of these shells, which sources say was not random. However, it is obvious that the reinforcements arranged by the Jordanian Arab Army have dominated events in the wake of growing speculation about the Saudi Arabian supported proposals and offers to “expand” the borders of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to include Al Anbar in Iraq and a safe area deep in the Syrian town of Der’a under the banner of resettling Syrian refugees within their country.*

# Jordan's Role in the Yemen Conflict

15 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 26 March Jordan announced its participation in Saudi-led operations in Yemen, reportedly contributing six fighter jets to the coalition's air campaign. Since March Jordan's military contributions to the operation have remained small and observers have noted that its emphasis continues to be on the threats it faces along its borders with Iraq and Syria. Jordan has continued to play a role as a mediator in the conflict, however. In late July Jordan reportedly hosted a meeting between Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, and a delegation of Yemeni Houthis.

As the accompanying excerpts note, Saudi Arabia continues to encourage greater Jordanian participation in the Yemen campaign. On 4 August Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman visited King Abdullah in Jordan. His visit was followed by Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi's request for additional military assistance from Jordan. Both accompanying articles consider Hadi's request as part of a larger game orchestrated by Riyadh to publically pressure Jordan into making additional commitments, and both make note of Jordan's strong reservations about contributing ground forces. Both articles also use language depicting Saudi policies in Yemen as risky and reckless.

Interestingly, the accompanying articles take opposing views of the situation. Writing for *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, Bassam al-Badarin believes that Jordanian policy is gradually shifting in favor of the Saudi position, while *Ad-Dustour* columnist Urayb Al-Rantawi highlights the dangerous consequences of becoming too involved in the "quicksand" of the conflict in Yemen. The results of this evolving debate will be important, as Jordan's financial stability largely hangs on the largesse of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Greater contribution to the Yemen campaign would divert Jordanian assets from its borders with Syria and Iraq, yet refusing Saudi requests could threaten the state's already strained economic system. **End OE Watch Commentary (Beeny)**

**Source:** Bassam al-Badarin. "Hadi Calls for 'Military' Assistance from Jordan in Coordination with Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Visit" *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*. 7 August 2015. <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=384159>.

## ***Hadi calls for "military" Assistance from Jordan in Coordination with Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Visit***

*It is obvious that President Hadi's call to request "military" assistance from the Jordanians was directed to occur virtually as soon as plane of the third man in Saudi Arabia, [Deputy Crown] Prince Mohammed bin Salman, departed Amman after an influential and important visit which later moved Jordan's relations with Saudi Arabia to the level of strategic alliance. In this sense, we can say that the political line given by Saudi ally President Hadi, which was to request Jordan's military assistance, was "coordinated" entirely by Prince Mohammed bin Salman from his position in the Jordanian court after a long period of estrangement between the two countries. Prince Salman's visit to Amman worked to "cleanse" all the remaining dregs of misunderstanding between Amman and Riyadh, mutual misunderstandings demonstrated previously by Jordan's strong reservations about options for ground engagement in Yemen. Jordan's reservations stem from the Jordanian military's "prior experience" in this country, and the difficulties and sensitivity of the wild confrontation. The strategic and diplomatic moves between Jordan and Saudi Arabia indicate that Amman's strategies of intervention in the Yemeni matter are evolving--albeit slowly--in favor of Saudi Arabia and Hadi.*

**Source:** Al-Rantawi, Urayb. "Is Jordan Entering the War in Yemen?" *Ad-Dustour*, 9 August 2015. <http://goo.gl/DptBN8>.

## ***Is Jordan Entering the War in Yemen?***

*The visit of the third man in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Jordan unleashed unceasing speculation about wider Jordanian participation in the ongoing war in Yemen. We view President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi's request for Jordan to assist his side militarily, through sending ground troops or training elements, as an official and indirectly public Saudi invitation. It has been usual since [Operation] Decisive Storm, to attribute the requests of the coalition and the official positions to President Hadi, especially those that need "cover" of a sort. The reality of the situation is that Jordan is a member of the Decisive Storm alliance, despite that it is an inefficient and inactive member. Most often, Jordan's participation does not exceed political and moral support. But more than that, Jordan, reading between the lines of official discourse, is not enthusiastic about opening a new battle front, or diverting attention and efforts from the front fighting DAISH and terrorism... Jordan and Egypt remain reluctant to fight amidst a ground war in Yemen, from memory on one hand, and knowledge of the geographic, topographic, and demographic complexities of Yemen on the other. The two countries have refrained from riding a wave of risk-taking...I do not rule out that we will see a Jordanian ground presence in Aden or other southern cities. It could occur in the final moments or on the eve of entering into serious negotiations in order to resolve the crisis, for which preparations are under way. However, any decision to deploy ground units on Yemeni soil, in any circumstance, will implicitly continue to carry risk: The situation in Yemen is like quicksand, no one knows when the balance of power and its calculations will shift. Participation by means of supporting President Hadi and training his forces will place Jordan against a group of Yemenis which whom it has historic links, and will make Jordan a party to this conflict, after having been an acceptable mediator to all for more than twenty years. We understand the desire and need for Jordan to develop strategic relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, just as we understand the risks which may follow a step of this kind in the event it is taken...But we hope and bet that "patience" and "prudence" will characterize the difficult decision making that many expect and await, some with more comfort, others with much anxiety. In politics and international relations it is said that the enmity of the United States costs much, and that her friendship does not always cost less. It seems this statement no longer applies to the United States alone. It appears it will be said in describing relations with regional centers and capitals as well.*

# The Economics of Terror: Sustainable Funding For The Islamic State Through International Trade

3 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** In 2014 the Islamic State was formed as a merger of several groups and declared its existence on Twitter. As a geo-political entity, a state must engage in several activities, to include establishing an economy.

One year following the declaration of ISIL as a state, the political leadership of the organization has made several steps toward establishing a sustainable flow of income to finance governance and operations. Following a seeding of donor funding, the first and second accompanying articles highlight methods ISIL has employed to migrate from a purely criminal enterprise into somewhat legitimate trade. Through a network of exchanges near the Syrian border, ISIL agents are able to sell crude oil at a fraction of the current market rate. In June 2015 ISIL traders were selling barrels of crude at USD20 per barrel at the Syria-Turkey border, while market trading was between USD58 and USD60 per barrel. Sellers from ISIL can afford to trade at significantly lower rates because they did not finance the development and construction of the extraction infrastructure.

The fourth article discusses ISIL diversification into the textile trade, selling Syrian cotton that was either seized as part of a territory grab or cultivated in their controlled territory. As with oil, ISIL avoided paying for the means of production and is able to sell cotton substantially discounted from typical rates. Funds for purchases are handled through a series of trusted exchanges in Turkey and Syria. Buyers deposit the purchase price for goods in an exchange on one side of the border, where they are transferred to an exchange on the other side for delivery to the seller. The arrangement allows parties to transfer money without making direct contact.

According to the third article, as of August 2015 ISIL held approximately 20% of the Levant region's wheat fields, which are highly significant as food sources for Iraqi and Syrian citizens. Wheat grown in ISIL territory will be instrumental in keeping its population fed, and while not likely a source of monetary gain, it will have a substantial impact on the ability of ISIL to economically sustain its government.

It is highly probably that establishing a legitimate government is among the key short-term objectives of ISIL leadership. Moving from purely criminal and donor-sourced financing to semi-legitimate trade will provide necessary sustainability for ISIL to be wholly self-financed. This will be a necessary step for ISIL to firmly establish a recognizable government presiding over the territory it controls. **End OE Watch Commentary (Krammes)**

**Source:** Damian Paletta, "CIA Reorganizes to Target Islamic State," *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 June 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/cia-reorganizes-to-target-islamic-state-1434326672>

*Islamic State militants pose a much different terror threat than al Qaeda did in the 2000s, using social media to win converts and a harder-to-stop financial strategy that uses extortion and war gains to fund operations, instead of tapping wealthy donors. This model has made it a more difficult terror organization to stop...*

**Source:** BBC News, "What is 'Islamic State'", 29 June 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144>

*[ISIL] initially relied on wealthy private donors and Islamic charities in the Middle East keen to oust Syria's President Assad. Although such funding is still being used to finance the travel of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq, the group is now largely self-funding. The US Treasury estimates that in 2014IS may have earned as much as several million dollars per week, or \$100m in total, from the sale of crude oil and refined products to local middlemen, who in turn smuggled them in Turkey and Iran, or sold them to the Syrian government.*

**Source:** Editorial Staff Author(s), "The Green Weapons gives ISIS \$ 200 million annually", *Shafaq News*, 3 August 2015, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:txShMCUenBQJ:english.shafaq.com/stories/15353-the-green-weapons-gives-isis-%24-200-million-annually.html+%&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>

*The organization took on more than a million tons of wheat, i.e. "five annual consumption in Iraq," according to "Jean-Charles Preezar" an expert on financing of terrorism. In Syria, jihadists enjoyed 30 percent of the wheat production in the regions of Raqqa and Deir al-Zour, subjected to their control by the expert. They also control 75 percent of the cotton production that Syria was one of the senior Exporters before the outbreak of war. As the case in parts of the Middle East and North Africa, bread forms the basis of nutrition in Iraq and Syria that import wheat in addition to their local production. [sic]*

**Source:** Editorial Staff Authors(s), "Islamic State: Where Do New Barbarians' Billions Come From," *6play.fr*, 15 June 2015, <http://www.6play.fr/m6/capital#/m6/capital/11492554-daesh-etat-islamique-d-ou-proviennent-les-milliardsdes-nouveaux-barbares>

*... estimated that ISIL has the annual revenue of "more than 2 billion euros", derived from trade in oil and gas, phosphates, cement, agricultural produce, art and antiques, donations, and "extortions" [extortions in this article also refer to taxes and fines levied on the population]...Syrian cotton is purchased by textile produces [sic] in Turkey who are forever searching "for the cheapest possible sources of cotton with little regard for its origin" ....the majority of ISIL's revenue went to pay and equip its fighters and finance propaganda.*

# Iran: Supreme Leader Ally Warns of Foreign Investment

31 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** A chief motivation for Iran’s nuclear negotiators—and a frequent theme of President Hassan Rouhani’s response when challenged by domestic opponents for negotiating with the United States—is that lifting the sanctions was crucial for Iran’s national interests, given the dire straits of the Iranian economy. Now that the permanent five members of the UN Security Council and Iran have agreed to a deal that could potentially lead to renewed trade between Iran and the West, the Iranian leadership is beginning to consider what the impact of that trade could be.

When Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned victorious to Iran in 1979, he instituted a tradition whereby he or a substitute appointed directly by him would deliver Friday prayer sermons every week in Tehran. The Friday prayer sermon quickly became the equivalent of a weekly “State of the Union” address to let ordinary Iranians, as well as the government bureaucracy, know the ruling clerics’ direction and intention. The phenomenon quickly spread beyond the capital, although an Office of the Friday Prayer Leaders operating out of the Office of the Supreme Leader coordinates themes and who delivers the sermons. In Mashhad, Iran’s second-largest city and home to the Shrine of Imam Reza, the eighth imam, Ayatollah Ahmad Alam ol Hoda, a confidant of Supreme Leader Khamenei, serves as permanent Friday prayer leader.

In the summary of a Friday prayer sermon excerpted here, ol-Hoda warns about the dangers of Western intentions and influence. In doing so he highlights a persistent intellectual trend among both the Iranian clergy and many secular Iranian intellectuals, which is deeply xenophobic and suspicion of Western capitalism.

While many American and European officials voice hope that trade will moderate Iran, the deep suspicion of the Iranian clerical leadership about Western intentions, as well as efforts supported at the top of the regime to hamper large-scale Western investment in the country suggests tension down the road. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

*“The enemies have greedy eyes set upon the markets of Iran.”*



Ayatollah Alam ol Hoda  
Source: Mehr News Agency

**Source:** “Doshmanan-e Diruz Cheshm-e Tamu’ah be Bazaar-e Emruz Iran Darand” (“The Enemies of Yesterday Have Greedy Eyes toward the Iranian Market Today”), *Mehr News*, 31 July 2015. <http://goo.gl/71zvT5>

## ***The Enemies of Yesterday Have Greedy Eyes toward Iran Today***

*The Friday Prayer Leader of Holy Mashhad, with reference to the agreements made and pointing to the expressed hope of many officials that the economic situation in the country would improve, said: “The enemies have greedy eyes set upon the markets of Iran and so be very careful.”*

*According to the report of the Mehr correspondent, Ayatollah Ahmad Alam ol Hoda while delivering his Friday prayer sermon this week in Mashhad, in the Imam Khomeini gallery of the shrine complex, said, “The gates of the country mustn’t be opened immediately after the agreement, and we must allow them to loot the economy of this country in the name of cooperation and partnership.*

*He said, “...the arrival of Europeans...who intend to flood us with junk goods does not lead to a resistance economy.” Alam ol Hoda further claimed that “our enemy has trained us in greed in ways that we do not even understand.” Alam ol Hoda also described “thoughtlessly laying out the red carpet for [Europe] in hopes of an economic boom” as a “disaster.”*

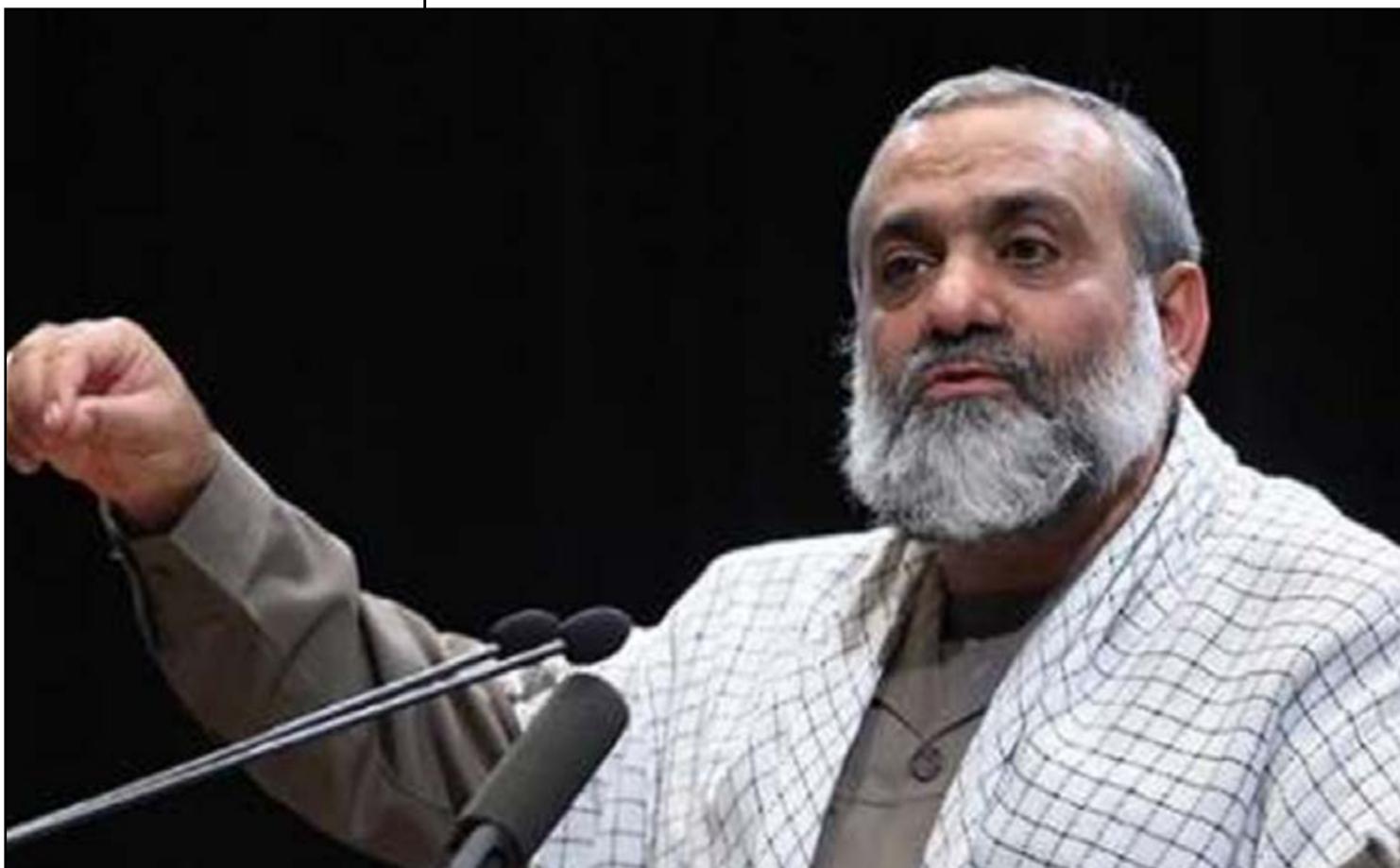
## Iran: IRGC Warns on Western Investment

8 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Most often Western analysts consider the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its subordinate Basij militia in terms of their military power. They are, however, just as formidable an economic power within the Iranian context. The IRGC became the elite frontline unit during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War. Upon its conclusion they were loath to return to the barracks and subordinate themselves to political control in Tehran. Accordingly, they chose to expand into the civilian economic sector so as to build an independent cash base to insulate themselves from Tehran's budgetary process. Over the decades they have grown into a huge conglomerate, monopolizing most large-scale manufacturing, heavy construction, and major import-export. In the past, they have not hesitated to use military force to drive competitors away and make it impossible for them to fulfill contracts. In one famous example from August 2006, an IRGC gunboat shot up an oil rig belonging to a Romanian company which had outbid the IRGC to work in one section of the South Pars oil field. Such tactics, however, might have worked against an isolated investor from a country unable to project military power, but they would be very risky if applied overtly to investors from more powerful European countries.

It is in this context, in the article excerpted here, that General Mohammad Reza Naghdi, head of the paramilitary Basij, is seeking to warn the Iranian audience about supposed ill-intent on the part of the West and that Iranians; he claims that they should not place their hopes in European investment to boost the Iranian economy. Instead, he lists a litany of supposed Western ills and then argues that Iran's future rests firmly among Islamic countries rather than Europe, and that Iran should not abandon its path of self-sufficiency, that is, to rely exclusively upon the IRGC for its heavy industry. Not only does Naghdi's speech provide some insight into the polarized vision inherent at senior levels of the IRGC and Basij, but it might also herald some trouble for Western businessmen traveling to Iran, given the close interplay between the Basij and some of the hardline vigilante groups who have roughed up foreigners in the past, including those in Iran with official invitations from more moderate factions within the Iranian government. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

*“Photo-ops with heads of European countries will not heal the pain of our economy.”*



General Naghdi, commander of the Basij  
Source: Islamic Republic News Agency, <http://media.irna.ir/1394/13940208/81588525/81588525-6418000.jpg>

**Source:** “Sardar Naghdi: Inha Mikhahand Dollarha ra az Dast-e Ma Kharaj Konand” (“General Naghdi: They [The West] want to take the dollars out of our hands”), *Entekhab.ir*, 30 July 2015. <http://goo.gl/gxF6ZG>

***Naghdi: The West “wants to take the dollars out of our hands.”***

*The head of the “The Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed,” (the Basij) with regard to the aims today of the European presence in Tehran, said that the aims aren’t different from those of sanctions, and said that photo-ops with heads of European countries will not heal the pain of our economy.*

*According to the Entekhab report, Gen. Mohammad Reza Naghdi, the commander of the Basij, this morning in the conference hall of Shahid Beheshi University at the end of the eighth course about the automated clearing house system, stated that...the world is plagued by hardships, misery, and great injustices. Gen. Naghdi reiterated that in the past year, during the month of Ramadan, 2,000 people were martyred in Gaza, and 508 of them were children. In the attack by the al-Saud regime upon Yemen, even more children were killed and in America, there’s hardly a day when someone isn’t killed. Just in the past week, a black-skinned woman, was arrested and after three days she was found hanged in prison....*

*Naghdi added that “cooperation between Muslim countries and Western countries goes nowhere,” and that Iran’s only path is to “equip [itself] with science and technology,” because Western technology has not led to Iranian self-sufficiency.*

# Iran: The Westerners Think That...The Road Will be Open to Their Return

3 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** In the article excerpted here, Gholam Ali Haddad Adel, a former speaker of parliament (2004-2008) who remains among Iran's most influential parliamentarians, argues that while he remains undecided about the merits of the nuclear deal struck between Iranian negotiators and representatives from the Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council plus Germany (the so-called P5+1), he is deeply concerned about the cultural reverberations of Iran moving closer to the West. His concerns highlight how senior Iranian leaders view the cultural aspects of the Islamic Revolution. To them, the Islamic Revolution was not simply about removing the Shah and ushering in a new leadership dominated by ayatollahs, but rather it was an effort to fundamentally remake every layer of Iranian society to conform much more to Islamic norms. In a sense, what Haddad Adel exposes is the Shi'ite equivalent to the all-encompassing efforts by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and other Sunni countries to wage cultural warfare to purge vestiges of Western cultural and liberalism.

Given his strong political constituency, Haddad-Adel's statements suggest that Iranian hardliners will continue to push enmity toward the United States and Americans as central to their platform, undercutting hopes for a broader reconciliation between Tehran and Washington. At the same time, his concern over cultural dilution could herald a concurrent effort at Islamic cultural revolution to occur concurrently with any Iranian receipt of Western investment.

**End OE Watch  
Commentary  
(Rubin)**

**Source:** "Haddad Adel: Gharbiha Khiyal Mikonand dar Dowran Posttahrir Rah Bazgoshtishon beh Iran Baz Shavad" ("Haddad Adel: The Westerners Think that in the Post-Sanctions Period, the Road Will be Open to Their Return to Iran"), *Tasnim News*, 3 August 2015 <http://www.tasnimnews.com/Home/Single/817770>

## ***"The Westerners Think That...The Road Will be Open to Their Return"***

*According to a report from the Tasnim correspondent from Holy Mashhad, Gholam Ali Haddad Adel in a special nuclear [deal] question and answer session at the Quran and Etrat Hosseiniyeh in Mashhad, stated, "The nuclear issue is a complex issue, and on the subject of the Joint Action Plan, I haven't announced a position, but this does not mean that it does not concern me. So far, I have explicitly said that I have concerns."*

*...He added: "In addition to looking at the content of the nuclear agreement, we must be worried about its affects. Of course, I hope that it will have a positive affect...the question is this: will the style of American life replace an Iranian style of life?" Adel stated "another problem is a problem of economics. Will there be a dependent economy instead of an economy of resistance..." Adel added, "There will be conflict between the U.S. and Iran for as long as the [Islamic] Revolution is strong."*

***"There will be conflict between the U.S. and Iran for as long as the Revolution is strong."***



Gholam Ali Haddad Adel

Source: <http://www.tasnimnews.com/Home/Single/817770>

# The Islamic State's "Sinai Province" on the Rise

30 July 2015

“...this strategy does not seek a quick military victory, but rather a long-term and bloody war of attrition...”

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Islamic State Sinai Province (SP) affiliate continues to assert itself. In mid-July its fighters claimed to have struck an Egyptian Navy vessel with an anti-tank guided missile. In early August they beheaded a Croatian civilian who had been abducted on the outskirts of Cairo. The group's most significant attack, though, occurred on 1 July, when they overran several Egyptian military checkpoints, killed over a dozen soldiers, and attacked a large military base in the center of the flashpoint town of Sheikh Zuweid.

The first two accompanying excerpts describe SP tactics and the 1 July attack. The Egyptian military has set up a string of checkpoints to defend the supply line leading to the border with Gaza (passing through downtown Sheikh Zuweid), providing the SP with a plethora of targets. The group has leveraged the element of surprise by simultaneously attacking a number of positions, and in several instances they have safely retreated to their havens south of Sheikh Zuweid with booty from looted checkpoints.

The first article argues that the SP seeks to lower Egyptian Army morale and proffers as evidence some of the group's tactics: continuous and sudden attacks, brutal treatment of prisoners, targeting of local informants. The SP, the author claims, is fighting a long-term and bloody war of attrition against Egypt's military. In a similar vein, the third accompanying article claims that a growing number of Egyptian males are seeking ways to avoid being conscripted into the Egyptian Army, in part for fear of being deployed in the Sinai.

(continued)

**Source:**

تنظيم ولاية سيناء: الصعود العسكري والآثار السياسية  
Omar Ashour. "The Sinai Province Organization: Its Military Rise and the Political Aftermath," al-Jazeera Center for Studies. 29 July 2015. <http://studies.aljazeera.net/reports/2015/07/201572974623635503.htm>

*[the SP arsenal includes] a mix of light and heavy artillery, rockets both guided and unguided, and snipers, all of which support the advance or withdrawal of units of tens or hundreds of infantry fighters... [On 1 July 2015] the organization's fighters simultaneously targeted 15 armed and security targets, completely destroying some of them. According to locals, around 300 rebel fighters took part in this operation, which lasted over 20 hours, and in which the group again used anti-aircraft missiles and appears to have neutralized the Apache helicopters... the group used a combination of IEDs, sniping weapons, and light artillery to halt military supplies from coming in. When the regime army launched a broad counter-offensive with dense aerial support, the rebels withdrew and mined their escape route to block pursuit. They left behind 17 army casualties according to official sources and more than 100 according to the father of one of the soldiers... the group's strategy for this period involves lowering morale among regime soldiers by... attacking continuously and by surprise, dealing brutally with regime prisoners, and targeting the local support networks (largely informants)... this strategy does not seek a quick military victory, but rather a long-term and bloody war of attrition.*



Sinai Map

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ASinai-peninsula-map.jpg>  
By CIA [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

## Continued: The Islamic State's "Sinai Province" on the Rise

The SP operates in a small corner at the northeastern edge of the Sinai Peninsula. By virtue of its location, it is as much, if not more of a concern to Gaza and Israel than it is to Cairo. The SP has likely already infiltrated Gaza and may be one kidnapping away from provoking Israeli military action. The fourth accompanying excerpt, from a news item published in the Egypt's semi-official *al-Ahram*, quotes an Israeli Army official as expressing his military's willingness to strongly engage SP if the group "tried to target our citizens and soldiers." **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



IS Sinai Province propaganda images showing strike on Egyptian naval vessel in mid-July.

Source: Islamic State propaganda images



IS Sinai Province training camp propaganda images

Source: Islamic State propaganda images

**Source:** حرب سيناء... لماذا الصراع على الشيخ زويد  
 "The War in Sinai... Why the Fight over Sheikh Zuweid?"  
*al-Araby al-Jadid*. 23 July 2015. <http://goo.gl/2dkjSf>

*The al-Zuhur base, the military's second-largest base in the Sinai, is located in Sheikh Zuweid... There are many local supporters of the army within the base, whom locals accuse of settling old scores in the name of "terrorism" and personal agendas. Most of these "advisors" are wanted by "Sinai Province" and consequently most do not ever leave the base, for fear of their life... There is also a base and airport for the Peacekeeping Forces in al-Jura (el-Gorah), south of Sheikh Zuweid. This base's sensitivity and importance became clear after "Sinai Province" targeted it in response to the arrest of a woman from Sheikh Zuweid last month. The woman was released the following day... [On 1 July] gunmen from IS Province gunmen launched their biggest attack against the city's main security and military points. They entered the city center and surrounded the city's Police Department, took control of the main hospital, and began targeting the al-Zuhur Base while deploying heavily in the city's streets...*

**Source:** Emir Nader. "Egypt's Draft Dodgers," *al-Monitor*. 22 July 2015. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/07/egypt-military-conscription-sinai-attacks.html>

*As photos of the young conscripts who had died circulated in newspapers and on social media, many Egyptians were alarmed at how the military could crumble so tragically. The martyred became the latest of at least 600 security personnel to lose their lives in the government's war on terrorism... Each year, Egypt enlists hundreds of thousands of young men to serve in the military, but critics say they are not trained well and are more often used as a form of cheap labor. Recruits face up to three years of mandatory service and a nominal wage of 250 Egyptian pounds (\$35) a month. Some are sent to the front lines in the restive North Sinai, while others are dispatched to police urban areas. The more fortunate can pull strings to find shelter amid the relative safety of the military's pasta factories and petrol stations.*

**Source:** Menna Alaa El-Din. "Israel Threatens to Attack Militants in Sinai if Needed," *al-Ahram*, 30 July 2015. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/136572/Egypt/Politics-/Israel-threatens-to-attack-militants-in-Sinai-if-n.aspx>

*A senior Israeli army officer has threatened to attack the Islamic State affiliate, Sinai Province, if they were to attack Israeli citizens and soldiers. "If the Sinai Province tried to target our citizens and soldiers, we will make sure we hit them forcefully and decisively," said Brigadier General Royi Elcabets. The commander was quoted on Wednesday by Israeli army spokesman Avichay Adraee, who posted the remarks on his Facebook page. The statement was made during a military ceremony marking the transfer of command from Elcabets to Rafi Miloa, the new head of the southern Adom formation. "There have been significant changes on the other side of the border that require us to be ready for any scenario or downside, and to continue securing our southern area," the new commander added.*

# Demographic Realignments in Syria and Iraq

5 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** In his 26 July Army Day speech, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said: “The homeland is not for those who live there or have its nationality and passport, but rather for those who fight to defend and protect it.” The Syrian opposition has taken this statement as further proof that the regime is carrying out a deliberate policy of population transfer, aimed at strengthening a future pro-Assad rump state.

Pro-Assad forces are not the only ones accused of deliberately altering the region’s demographics: Syrian and Iraqi Kurdish, Iraqi Shi’a, and Islamic State fighters are all suspected of preventing residents from returning to newly “liberated” areas. Three articles from local news sources are excerpted here as examples. The first cites recent instances of both Kurdish Peshmerga and “Popular Mobilization” Shi’a militias forbidding displaced Sunnis from *(continued)*

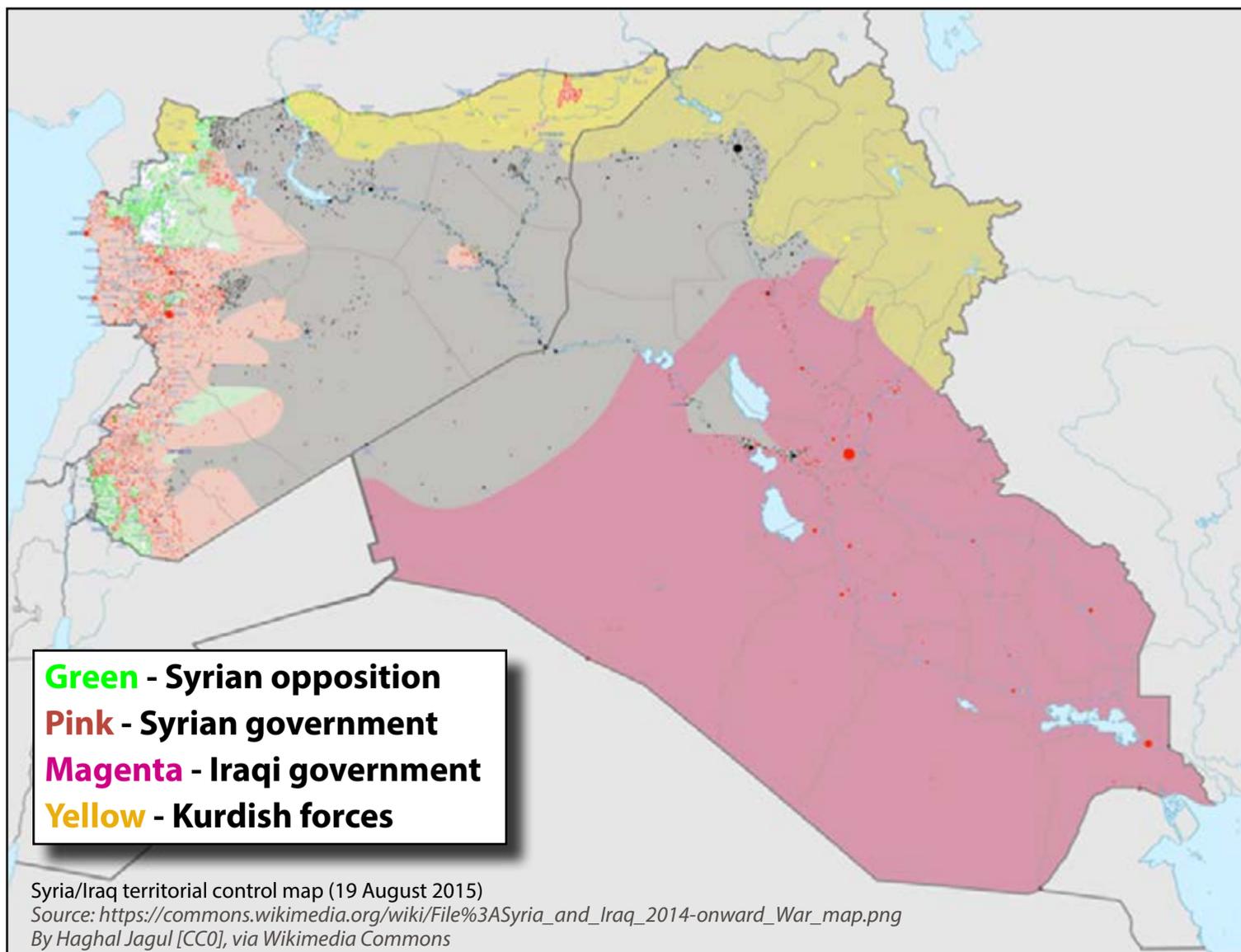
“... new “states,” based on confessional, sectarian or ethnic foundations ...”

**Source:** مليشيات العراق تمنع عودة النازحين: تثبيت التغيير الديمغرافي  
Abdullah al-Thawini. “Iraqi Militias Prevent Refugees from Returning: Proof of Demographic Transformation,” *al-Araby al-Jadid*. 22 July 2015. <http://goo.gl/fMsWxA>

*Nahda al-Daini, a female Iraqi legislator from Diyala Province, told al-Araby al-Jadid that the Peshmerga had prevented refugee families from the town of Jalawla from returning after it was liberated from ISIL... According to a member of the Iraqi Forces Alliances, even though several parts of Diyala have been liberated for months, including the towns of al-Adhim, al-Saadiya, Jalawla, as well as al-Muqdad and 38 other villages, only 2,000 out of 150,000 displaced families have returned... A security source in Diyala Province said that Popular Mobilization militias had also prevented the return of refugees to areas liberated by security forces in al-Saadiya subdistrict...*

**Source:** سوريا... عمليات تهجير قسرية لسكان تل أبيض  
“Syria... Forced Displacement of Tel Abyad’s Residents,” *al-Arabiya*. 28 June 2015. <http://goo.gl/XrLwAM>

*The complaints against Kurdish Forces increased after they took control of Tel Abyad, a city in Raqqa Province. The fact-finding commission formed by the Syrian National Coalition found that the Kurdish People’s Protection Forces committed several transgressions against the civilians in the area. The Arab and Turkmen residents of Tel Abyad were subjected to forced displacement and prevented from returning to their homes ever since ISIL was expelled from the city.*



## Continued: Demographic Realignments in Syria and Iraq

returning to their homes in Diyala Province; the second details how Syrian Kurdish forces prevented Sunni villagers from returning to their homes in Tel Abyad District (Raqqa Province); the third recounts how the Islamic State expelled the sizable Kurdish population from the city of Raqqa.

Displacement of local Sunnis has become the norm in towns and villages seized from the Islamic State. This trend is nurturing a sense of victimhood among Sunnis, who see the Shi'a and Kurds as collectively punishing Sunni communities for the actions of the radicals. Syria's and Iraq's various minority religious groups also have reason to be fearful, given the Islamic State's brutal treatment of most non-Sunnis in areas it conquers.

The fourth excerpt is from an article authored by Talal Salman, the longtime publisher of the Lebanese daily, *al-Safir*, and an authoritative voice among secular Arab nationalists. In it he argues that an international plan is underway to redraw the borders of modern Syria, Iraq and Yemen along confessional, sectarian and/or ethnic lines. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

Source:

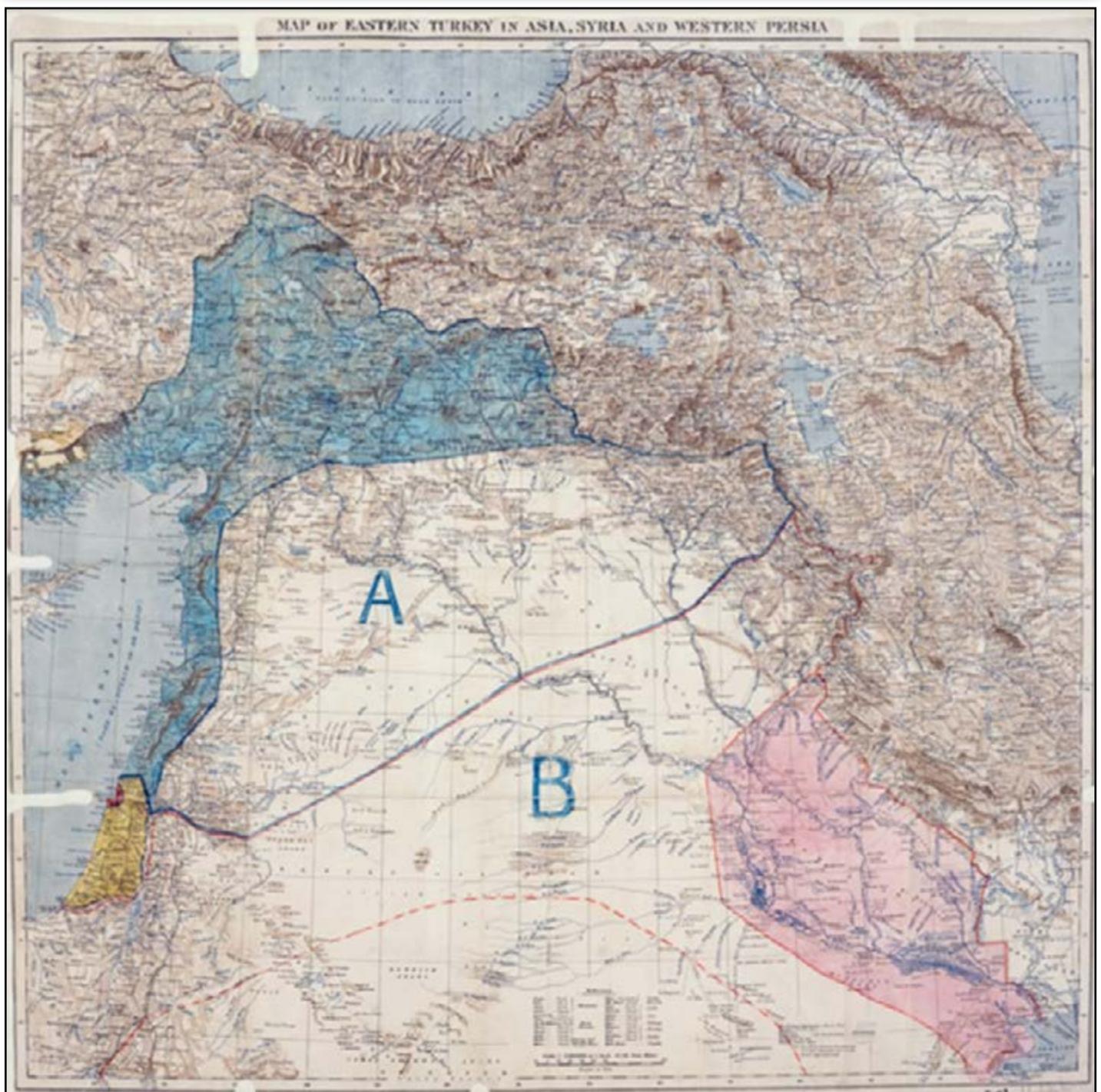
الرفقة تحت حكم "داعش" .. رعب وغلاء.. ولا أكراد  
 "Raqqa under ISIL... Expensive and Terrifying... and without Kurds," *al-Arabiya*. 11 July 2015. <http://goo.gl/WLMgnA>

*In a related matter, Raqqa has been fully emptied of its Kurdish residents, after ISIL asked them to depart for the city of Palmyra, in rural Homs. Abu Bakr al-Maghrebi, an activist, explains that the organization accuses Raqqa's Kurds of supporting the international coalition and Kurdish forces. It gave them 72 hours to leave Raqqa, with all remaining after the period being subject to punishment. He added that a small number of Kurds complied with the group's orders and left toward Palmyra. Many families, though, were able to flee toward Ain al-Arab (Kobane) and other areas controlled by the Kurdish Protection Forces in northern Syria.*

Source:

خرائط جديدة للوطن العربي تقسم العرب بطوائفهم لتطمئن الأقليات  
 Talal Salman, "A New Map for the Arab World Dividing Arabs by Sect to Reassure Minorities," *al-Safir*. 5 August 2015. <http://assafir.com/Article/1/435147>

*On the Arab horizon are projects to build new "states," based on confessional, sectarian or ethnic foundations... [Arabs] are threatened by the loss of three historically important countries: Syria, Iraq and Yemen. The cities of these three ancient countries - capitals of human civilization - are being systematically destroyed and their popular unity is being ripped apart...*



Sykes-Picot Map

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3A3AMPK1-426\\_Sykes\\_Picot\\_Agreement\\_Map\\_signed\\_8\\_May\\_1916.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3A3AMPK1-426_Sykes_Picot_Agreement_Map_signed_8_May_1916.jpg)  
 By Royal Geographical Society (Map), Mark Sykes & François Georges-Picot (Annotations) [Public domain or Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

# Military Training in the Islamic State

5 August 2015

“...After undergoing the Sharia and military camps, the mujahid is allocated a job that fits his abilities ...”

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 5 August 2015 the Lebanese daily, *al-Safir*, published an article detailing the two-step process for transforming Islamic State (IS) recruits into soldiers. The process involves indoctrination into the group’s brand of Islam and military training, in that order. The article identifies a manual used in the military training, *Field Philosophy - Insights into Military Planning*. The book was published in Gaza in 2011 and is available online. As a manual it is concise and effective, describing pertinent tactical concepts in a straightforward, readable style. Its table of contents is excerpted alongside this commentary.

Once military training is completed, the article explains, “the mujahid is allocated a job that fits his abilities.” These jobs may not necessarily be military in nature and include working in the bureaucracy, as well as “outside the ‘land of the Caliphate.’” In a recent social media post an IS supporter takes a stab at identifying the different divisions to which trainees are sent. A table drawn from his posting accompanies this commentary. Even if roughly accurate, the proposed structure should hardly be considered definitive, given the group’s proven ability to learn, adapt and transform according to the situation. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**

**Source:** «التعبئة الفكرية والإعداد العسكري ...» داعش  
Wissam Abdullah. “ISIL... Ideological Mobilization and Military Preparation,” *al-Safir*. 5 August 2015. <http://assafir.com/Article/1/435230> (translation via: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2015/08/syria-fighters-join-isis-apply-training-requirements.html>)

*Shouting “Allahu Akbar” (“God is Great”) is not the only requirement a mujahid (fighter) has to fulfill to be inducted into the Islamic State (IS). He is subjected to a systematic intellectual information based on books, publications and fatwas, accompanied by military training — including physical training and training on the use of different types of weapons... During military training, the mujahid learns fighting principles with individual weapons. He then reaches the combat, engagement, movement, camouflage and military plans phase. There is a publication about the Katyusha rocket launcher and its using method, and another about maps, and how to read them and understand their implications. There is a book titled “field philosophy — insights into military planning,” printed in Gaza in 2011 and written by Yusuf Hassan Hijazi... After undergoing the Sharia and military camps, the mujahid is allocated a job that fits his abilities. Some are sent to the battlefronts; others are sent to the hearts of cities and entrusted with non-military work. Still, others work secretly in missions outside the “land of the Caliphate.” Such people usually enjoy qualities, actions and ways of speaking that hide their belonging to the terrorist organization.*

*Cholera broke out in the capital last year, five months into a civil war that is still ongoing over a year later. That outbreak was devastating infecting more than 6,000 people across 16 counties and resulted in the deaths of 167.*

**Source:** فلسفة الميدان - رؤى في التخطيط العسكري  
Yusuf Hassan Hijazi. *Field Philosophy - Insights into Military Planning* (TABLE OF CONTENTS), 2011. <http://ia600709.us.archive.org/31/items/FLSAFA/FLSAFA.pdf>

**Source:** Adapted from: Omar Fawaz, 11 July 2015 social media posting. <http://s04.justpaste.it/pdf/diwanaljundnotes-justpaste-it-663647.pdf> (Translation via: <http://www.aymennjawad.org/2015/06/islamic-state-training-camps-and-military#continued>)

1. Preface
2. Introduction
3. Military planning
4. Military operations
5. Storming
6. Ambush
7. Defensive tactics
8. Urban warfare
9. Guerrilla warfare
10. Special operations
11. Dealing with fortifications
12. Attacking
13. Dealing with wastelands
14. Inquiries and ideas
15. Intelligence gathering
16. Conclusion (with summary of Sun Tzu’s “the Art of War”)

DIVISION	ABILITIES
Special Forces	physical and mental capability and distinguished physically
Air Defense	large, healthy body and powerful, excellent sight
Sniper Battalion	bility to be patient, hold out and powerful sight and intelligence
The Caliphate Army	stern conditions the most important being not thinking of marriage and service will be in the lands of the Caliphate in the wilayats outside of Iraq and al-Sham, and other conditions
Army of Adversity	only requiring success in the general test that qualifies you to join it
Prior Demand from Diwan	when some of the applicants come from the path of the Diwans of the state that need them and according to their special vocation
Administration	trainees who completed their education at the hands of specialists and similarly trainees who excel in use of electronic devices and accounting
The rest are distributed in fronts and camps after the end of the military camp training according to where they are needed.	

## Somalia: About that Supposed Overmatch... AMISOM's Struggle Against Al-Shabaab

11 August 2015

*“AMISOM has been in the field for eight years, but the Islamist militant group is by no means on its last legs. It can do more than just suicide bombings and hit-and-run attacks, and it remains capable of taking AMISOM on at its own game – and winning.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** Despite some recent and well publicized successes against the terrorist group al-Shabaab, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), as the accompanying article relates, is perhaps not as overmatched against its foe as some press releases might suggest. Indeed, the 26 June 2015 al-Shabaab attack on a contingent of Burundian soldiers in what was supposed to be the well fortified town of Leego revealed that not only can al-Shabaab perform the activities traditionally associated with terrorist groups, such as suicide bombings, but it can also carry out military maneuvers, with over 50 dead Burundian troops (the exact number is disputed) as proof.

AMISOM in its latest offensive against al-Shabaab, Operation Juba Corridor, launched in collaboration with units of the Somalia National Army, has, as the accompanying article notes, claimed strategic victories and territorial gains. However, as the article also relates, to an extent the operation has not destroyed al-Shabaab and its assets as much as dislodged them, allowing the terrorists to fight another day. Adding to AMISOM's problems, operations such as this one often result in civilian casualties, causing a very angry local populace to question AMISOM's capabilities and intent, especially since some of the AMISOM forces are from Ethiopia, long considered an enemy by many Somalis.

Thus, while AMISOM is touting success against al-Shabaab because of the former's territorial gains from the latter, the whole story is significantly more complicated. True degradation of al-Shabaab through operations such as the elimination of the terrorists' senior and mid-level leadership has been harder to accomplish. Until then, despite setbacks, it appears that al-Shabaab will, according to the article, be capable of continuing to employ the asymmetric tactics of terrorists, as well as at times more conventional military tactics. The result for AMISOM is its overmatch against al-Shabaab may not be as great as once thought. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

**Source:** "AMISOM's new offensive creates more questions than answers," *Institute for Security Studies (South Africa)*, 11 Aug 2015, <https://www.issafrica.org/pscreport/addis-insights/amisoms-new-offensive-creates-more-questions-than-answers>

*Analysts, however, warn that al-Shabaab cannot be wiped out with military force alone.*

*In the town of Leego, al-Shabaab attacked an AMISOM military base that was supposed to be well fortified and well defended by a contingent of Burundian troops. It was not... Beyond the tragic loss of life, the attack was devastating because it showed that al-Shabaab is far from the weakened force it was supposed to be by now.*

*AMISOM's response was not long in coming... 'This offensive, code-named Operation Juba Corridor, is aimed at further degrading al-Shabaab by removing them from their strongholds ...' Within a week, AMISOM was claiming major strategic victories and territorial gains.*

*It is an impressive list, but analysts question whether these territorial gains really represent substantive progress.*

*Although AMISOM is hailing Operation Juba Corridor as a triumph, the truth is that it remains too early to make that determination.*

*And those claims of civilian casualties, if left unchecked, may strengthen al-Shabaab's propaganda and weaken local support for AMISOM and the Somali Federal Government. Ethiopia's high-profile involvement, meanwhile, could also backfire if it is perceived as another Ethiopian invasion rather than a genuine peacekeeping mission...*



AMISOM soldiers, such as the one pictured above, are confronting an enemy, al-Shabaab, that is proving to be both resilient and resourceful.

**Source:** <https://www.issafrica.org/pscreport/addis-insights/amisoms-new-offensive-creates-more-questions-than-answers>

# Reactions from Obama's Trip to the Africa Union

July, August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** When he delivered a speech at the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in late July, President Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to formally address the pan-African international organization. Unsurprisingly, his appearance at the AU was noted in African media outlets not only for its historic nature, but also because it served as a lens through which many on the continent viewed U.S. understandings of Africa, its place in the world, and its relationship with the United States. Commentators from around the continent have analyzed the speech in various ways, which are recounted below.

Many around the continent were impressed with the speech. Notwithstanding the president's patrilineal connection to Kenya, many applauded the President's speech for its content and message. Many were quick to applaud the president's critique of autocracies in Africa, particularly, the sometimes pointed critiques of Ethiopia. Indeed, as Simon Allison, author of the first article, relays, unveiled critiques of Africa's non-democratic leaders are a hallmark of American global leadership: "It was an honest moment, and an important reminder that for all its faults, the United States retains – and exercises – the kind of moral leadership that superpowers such as China and Russia fail to do. And in the rarefied corridors of the African Union, where moral leadership is not always as forthcoming as it should be, it came as an unexpected – albeit welcome – surprise, as evidenced by the thunderous applause which these words generated."

Others viewed the president's visit in geopolitical terms. As is en vogue to do, many viewed the visit as an attempt to counterbalance Chinese presence on the continent. The Ethiopian author of the second article thus turned to Chinese media outlets' analyses of Obama's trip, and relays that from certain Ethiopians' perspectives, "in short, China also thought it was about them." Others, however, such as the author of the third article, wonder if by welcoming the U.S. president with such gusto, Ethiopia had, in fact, just insulted what is arguably its more important partner, China. As he asks: "Why is the reception for the Chinese premier Li Keqiang, who visited on May 5 of last year was [sic] not on par to [sic] this visit? What message does that send to our Chinese allies who were very generous in funding our infrastructure projects for a decade?"

As with any visit, there were critiques. Allison notes that Africans still feel uneasy about the U.S.'s growing drone program; others have suggested that the U.S. demands for democratization are hypocritical. Others still critiqued Obama for not giving enough credit to Ethiopian soldiers engaged in the fight against al-Shebab in Somali and deferring the problem of Mediterranean migration to European partners. Nevertheless, the general sense on the continent was that the president's speech at the AU was welcome for its candor, and that his giving the AU speech alone was a notable step forward. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**

*“The United States retains – and exercises – the kind of moral leadership that superpowers such as China and Russia fail to do.”*

**Source:** Allison, Simon. 2015. "Why Obama's AU Speech Matters." *Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria)*. [https://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/think-again-why-obamas-au-speech-matters?utm\\_campaign=7%2F30%2F2015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=July%2030%202015%20EN](https://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/think-again-why-obamas-au-speech-matters?utm_campaign=7%2F30%2F2015&utm_medium=email&utm_source=July%2030%202015%20EN).

*There was a point, in Barack Obama's nearly hour-long speech at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa on Tuesday, when the American president deviated from the script that had been circulated beforehand to journalists.*

*He was talking about human rights, and democracy, and how African countries need to remember that real democracy is not just about elections – a clear jab at his Ethiopian host Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, whose party just won 100% of the seats in Ethiopia's parliament. Then he started to ad-lib: 'The bottom line is when citizens can't exercise their rights, the world has a responsibility to speak out, and America will, even when it is uncomfortable. And I know that some countries don't say anything, and it's kind of easier for leaders to deal with, but you're stuck with us and this is our approach.'*

*It was an honest moment, and an important reminder that for all its faults, the United States retains – and exercises – the kind of moral leadership that superpowers such as China and Russia fail to do. And in the rarefied corridors of the African Union, where moral leadership is not always as forthcoming as it should be, it came as an unexpected – albeit welcome – surprise, as evidenced by the thunderous applause, which these words generated.*

*And Obama made good on his promise, offering plenty of direct and unambiguous criticism of this continent's leadership and their political choices...*

*.... The speech was broadcast live, uncensored, on Ethiopian national television. Prime Minister Hailemariam clapped and nodded as Obama offered his critique – effectively acknowledging, at the highest level of government, that the current system is flawed and needs to improve. For a regime that is notoriously sensitive to criticism, this is a hugely significant moment – and could potentially empower a new wave of activists in the country.*

*.... Of course, America's moral leadership is not for everyone. And rightly so. The tone can be a problem, as can the direction, and the principles it applies to others while ignoring these themselves. Tellingly, at no point did Obama mention America's ever-expanding and largely unaccountable drone program, which is rapidly moving into Africa. That there's an element of hypocrisy to Obama's comments is undeniable. However, it's a price worth paying if they shift some of the continent's norms around leadership and human rights in a progressive direction, even incrementally.*

*(continued)*

## Continued: Reactions from Obama's Trip to the Africa Union

**Source:** Getachew, Tarikua. 2015. "Ethiopia: The Meek Flyby - Silences and Reactions." *Addis Standard (Addis Ababa)*. 17 August. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201508181432.html>.

*...Obama came and was, annoyingly, predictable. First, all our forecasts came to be... We expected the salesman Obama and we got him. He even sold the Somalia war back to us...*

*....I turned to the experts, the Chinese....Their unequivocal state media was enlightening before the visit and during the Kenya trip. It made puns at the US President, which Foreign Policy qualified "almost racist" and "insecure" but which seemed to me, exaggeration granted, only a repeat of everything Obama either said himself he would do and did do. CCTV's Beatrice Marshall's pronunciation of "US is playing catch up with China"...in short, China also thought it was about them.*

*.... In your strange orchestrated flyby in my city, Mr. President, you left with many quotes for the Ethiopian government (they had run out of things you said about them). You have left Ethiopians with enough arguments to demand a monument in Washington DC for all Ethiopians who paid with their lives in Somalia for America, so far. You left migration to be a European problem with not even a word much less a wreath for Ethiopians slaughtered like animals by ISIS. ...You left not knowing how many languages we have in Ethiopia or how to correctly say Oromo....*

**Source:** Berhane, Fetsum. 2015. "Obama in Ethiopia: Did We Just Insult China?" *Horn Affairs (Ethiopia)*. 27 July. <http://hornaffairs.com/en/2015/07/27/obama-in-ethiopia-did-we-just-insult-china/>.

*...The over-the-top reception the government organized and the unprecedented live coverage [of Obama's trip]...raises some questions. Why is the reception for the Chinese premier Li Keqiang, who visited on May 5 of last year was not on par to this visit? What message does that send to our Chinese allies who were very generous in funding our infrastructure projects for a decade? Who does the government of Ethiopia take as its strategic and critical ally?*

*China has provided Ethiopia with loans amounting in billions of dollars to build roads and bridges, railways and dams, factories and almost everything. Ironically, even the tallest building in the capital, the AU building where Obama is going to make a speech is a Chinese donation. The strong friendship between China and Ethiopia extends to ideological concurrence between the ruling political parties. China considers Ethiopia's friendship as a "gateway to Africa". On the other hand, Ethiopia considers China as an alternative world power and source of finance free from the preconditions that come attached with loans from her western partners and the Britton Woods institutions.*

*.... Whichever the case, getting our signals right and not disappointing our reliable allies is something that should be noted.*



President Obama was the first US leader to give a speech at the African Union. African reactions to his speech and presence have been widely varied.

Source: <http://www.breakingnews.com/item/2015/07/28/president-obama-to-african-union-i-stand-before/>

# Nigeria Appoints New Head of Multinational Joint Task Force 30 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Nigeria has named Major General Illiya Abbah as the new head of the five-nation Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), composed of member states Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin, to fight Boko Haram. The MNJTF, expected to number 87,000 soldiers, is at the heart of the effort to combat Boko Haram, which, by current estimates, has killed some 15,000 people, including 800 since May, when Nigeria elected its new anti-Boko Haram president, General Muhammadu Buhari.

General Abbah seems to be a solid choice. He was, per both of the below articles, the former commander against militants in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta, in the southeast of the country. For years local populations who lived in the marshy areas waged attacks on both government forces and multinational oil companies based in the region (including Shell, Chevron, and the French company Total), claiming that the collusion between the oil companies and the Nigerian government ensured that the latter two profited handsomely, while the local residents continued to live in poverty. Thus, various coalitions of anti-oil, anti-government forces emerged, most notably the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), launching a local insurgency that, until the emergence of Boko Haram in approximately 2009, was by far Nigeria's most pressing security problem. The insurgency there has died down as a result of a generally successful amnesty program and increased patrolling efforts from the military, directed in part by Major Gen. Abbah. Thus, Buhari is hoping that Abbah can translate those counterterrorism experiences in the Niger Delta into the fight against Boko Haram.

As concerns the broader regional fight, Abbah's promotion signifies continuity in a Nigerian strategy that has insisted on its own leadership in the fight against Boko Haram. On one hand, Abbah's appointment is typical of the Nigerian demand to remain in the lead of the MNJTF. While some of the members of the coalition had suggested in June that the head of the MNJTF rotate (before Abbah's appointment), Nigeria was adamant that its commanders alone would be at the helm. And so it is. (For more on Nigeria's insistence on maintaining leadership of the MNJTF, see Warner, "Nigeria demands to stay in the lead of Multinational Joint Task Force Against BH," in the July 2015 edition of Operational Environment Watch.) In addition to appointing the head of the MNJTF, Nigeria, when questioned about when the MNJTF will be deployed, has continued its policy of giving vague, sometime contradictory details. According to Buhari, "It should be ready today or tomorrow, by the end of this month." As of late August it still has not deployed. Moreover, Nigeria continues to be critical of the United States for disallowing the sale of weapons - especially Apache attack helicopters - to fight the group. Yet, while the appointment of Abbah signals more of the same, as detailed in the next entry, certain aspects of the Nigerian and regional strategies against Boko Haram do show signs of improving evolution. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**

*“Asked when the new regional force would go into action, Buhari said: ‘It should be ready today or tomorrow, by the end of this month.’”*

**Source:** “Le Général Nigérian Iliya Abbah Nommé À La Tête de La Force Multinationale Contre Boko Haram.” 2015. [Nigerian General Iliya Abbah Named the Head of the Multinational Force Against Boko Haram.] 31 July. *Jeune Afrique*. [http://www.jeuneafrique.com/251928/politique/general-nigerian-iliya-abbah-nomme-chef-de-force-multinationale-contre-boko-haram/?utm\\_medium=RSSfeed&utm\\_campaign=benin](http://www.jeuneafrique.com/251928/politique/general-nigerian-iliya-abbah-nomme-chef-de-force-multinationale-contre-boko-haram/?utm_medium=RSSfeed&utm_campaign=benin)

*Nigeria has named General Illya Abbah as the head of the new multinational regional force to combat Boko Haram, the army announced on Thursday.*

*“General Abbah was previously the head of operation in the Niger Delta, a strategic, oil-rich region in the south of Nigeria....*

*...”Few details have been communicated on the specific nature of the new regional force, making people wonder about delays as concerns its deployment, but it is being touted as being more effective than the preceding coalition, which was sometime poorly coordinated in its action on the ground.*

**Source:** “Boko Haram: Abbah Heads Multinational Task Force.” 2015. *The NEWS (Nigeria)*. 30 July. <http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2015/07/boko-haram-abbah-heads-multinational-task-force/>.

*Nigeria on Thursday named Major-General Illya Abbah as the head of the N'djamena based multinational task force created to fight Boko Haram jihadists. He replaces Major General Tukur Buratai, who was named chief of army staff two weeks ago.*

*...The Multi-National Joint Task Force, made up of 8,700 troops from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Benin, is expected to be more effective than a current alliance in the battle to end Boko Haram's six-year insurgency, which has claimed some 15,000 lives.*

*In a joint statement after their talks in Yaoundé, Buhari and Cameroon's President Paul Biya expressed “their common determination to eradicate Boko Haram... and agreed to intensify the exchange of information between the two countries.” They will also beef up security along their shared border, the statement added.*

*Asked when the new regional force would go into action, Buhari said: “It should be ready today or tomorrow, by the end of this month.”*

*But he added: “After the promises of G7 countries to help the region defeat Boko Haram, we are waiting for training, equipment and intelligence assistance.”*

*Buhari visited Washington last week but returned empty-handed because the United States is prohibited by law from sending weapons to countries that fail to tackle human rights abuses, a stance the Nigerian leader said was helping Boko Haram.*

*Boko Haram has stepped up its attacks since Buhari took office in May, unleashing a wave of violence that has claimed more than 800 lives in just two months.*

*In another gruesome attack reported Thursday, Boko Haram militants slit the throats of 10 fishermen in villages on the shores of Lake Chad in northeastern Nigeria on Monday, a fisherman and a resident told AFP.*

# Buhari Announces Deadline in Fight Against Boko Haram

15 August 2015

*“President Muhammadu Buhari...charged the new heads of the Nigerian military to defeat the Boko Haram insurgents within three months.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** In a surprising move, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has announced a three-month deadline, at the end of which he expects the Boko Haram insurgency to be over. As per the first and second articles, the announcement came at the swearing-in ceremony for the new senior military officers across all branches of the Nigerian military, whom Buhari appointed last month. (For more on the shake-up of senior Nigerian military officers, see “Behind the Nigerian Military Shakeup,” August 2015 OEW). In the swearing-in ceremony Buhari announced the three-month deadline for the end of Boko Haram. Moreover, in the same speech, as per the second article below, he also called for a wider effort to end crime in Nigeria in general, including banditry and kidnapping. Finally, he also importantly, on a more macroscopic level, called for a recommitment to the professionalization of the Nigerian military - which has often been criticized for not living up to such standards - as well as the adherence to international standards of appropriate behavior in combat.

On one hand, the move to administer a timeline for the end of Boko Haram is admirable and is a signal of the new life that Buhari has brought to the fight. To be sure, while perhaps overly optimistic, the issuing of a timeline gives some sort of coherence to a Nigerian fight against Boko Haram that has often been characterized by few details, contradictory statements, and a lack of clarity regarding plans, goals, and intentions. Indeed, Buhari’s election to the presidency in May was at least partly precipitated due to the fact that his previous experience as a general in the Nigerian military suggested his likely efficacy at dealing with Nigeria’s most pressing security problem. Moreover, since his election, he has undertaken numerous initiatives that show his seriousness of purpose. These include moving the head of the fight to the northeastern city of Maiduguri and, more recently, finally granting permission for members of the five-nation Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to be allowed to pursue Boko Haram suspects into Nigerian territory. Moreover, Buhari’s recent visits to all four member states of the MNJTF - Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin - as well as the appointment of a new Nigerian head of the MNJTF, General Illiya Abbah, further signal the potential for sea change.

Yet, the announcement of the deadline could have been a misstep. For one, such lofty goals are frankly unlikely to be translated into reality. While one hopes that the fight can be concluded in just three months, Buhari risks losing credibility among the Nigerian military, civil society, and the international community at large if the fight extends beyond the deadline, which it most likely will. Moreover, the issuing of a deadline could also potentially embolden Boko Haram itself: if the group endures past the three-month benchmark that Buhari has set, it can thus discredit Abuja and potentially strengthen itself in the meantime. What the outcome of the deadline will be remains to be seen. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**

**Source:** Opoola, Murtala. 2015. “Nigeria: An Ultimatum On Boko Haram.” *Daily Trust* (Lagos). August 15. [http://allafrica.com/stories/201508172048.html?aa\\_source=nwsltr-terrorism-en](http://allafrica.com/stories/201508172048.html?aa_source=nwsltr-terrorism-en).

*President Muhammadu Buhari has told his service chiefs he wants them to put an end to the unceasing and intractable campaign of the Boko Haram in three months. He said this while they were being decorated with their new titles, and that Boko Haram must be completely wiped out, warning however that even while at it no human and material resources must be wasted unduly....*

*...On Nigeria’s side, PMB has given his ultimatum-by January 2016, he does not want notions about insurgency, Boko Haram, insecurity etc. - now more or less a daily preoccupation of his time to continue to be so. He wants all insecurity matters to be done with by that time-they should be rooted out root and branch, in order to be able to focus on paying attention to the positive demands of work to return Nigeria to the path of moral and ethical regeneration as well as economic growth.*

**Source:** Talatu Usman, “Nigeria: Buhari Charges Nigeria’s Military Chiefs to Defeat Boko Haram in 3 Months” *Premium Times* (Lagos) 13 August 2015. [http://allafrica.com/stories/201508132098.html?aa\\_source=nwsltr-armsandarmies-en](http://allafrica.com/stories/201508132098.html?aa_source=nwsltr-armsandarmies-en).

*President Muhammadu Buhari on Thursday charged the new heads of the Nigerian military to defeat the Boko Haram insurgents within three months.*

*The president made the call when he swore-in the new service chiefs in Abuja. The decorated service chiefs - General Abayomi Gabriel Olonishakin, Chief of Defence Staff; Lt-General T.Y. Buratai, Chief of Army Staff; Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas, Chief of Naval Staff; and Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar, Chief of Air Staff - were appointed on July 13 and confirmed by the Senate on August 4.*

*Mr. Buhari, who was joined by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, charged the new military chiefs to brace up to the challenge of the insurgency.*

*Apart from asking the soldiers to resolving the insurgency in three months, the president also charged them to ensure that armed banditry, kidnapping, and other forms of criminality are phased out within this period.*

*...The president also charged the military chiefs to be accountable for both the men and equipment placed under their command, in the course of carrying out their assignment.*

*“Your troops welfare must be uppermost in your mind, take care of them and make available what is due to them, “ he said, promising that his administration would provide all the resources the soldiers need to succeed.*

*Mr. Buhari asked the service chiefs to re-professionalize the military and ensure troops are well trained and equipped before going to battle.*

*“You should also ensure that they abide with the newly enforced rules and relations of international standards while carrying out their assigned tasks,” he said. “In particular you must protect innocent civilians and respect the rights of combatant. This no doubt will earn the support of local communities and the respect of our allies and support of international community.”*

# Nigeria Announces Creation of Weapons Factory

13 August 2015

*“The defence ministry had been told to develop plans for a ‘modest military industrial complex.’”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** In a bid to reduce dependence on foreign weapons manufacturers, Nigeria is planning to open a light weapons factory. As per the first and second articles, President Buhari has told the Defense Ministry, as well as other science and technology branches of the federal government, to make plans for the creation of what he called “a modest military industrial complex” to produce light arms.

The move comes as a result of Nigeria’s frustration with the U.S.’s refusal to sell Nigeria weapons - particularly Apache attack helicopters - to help Abuja fight Boko Haram. In short, the U.S. has refused the sale because of long-held concerns about the human rights practices of the Nigerian military, which is often accused of illegal detentions, poor treatment of civilians, lack of respect for the rule of law, and other widespread rights violations. The refusal caused a notable rift in late 2014, in the waning days of the Goodluck Jonathan presidency. However, Buhari’s election - along with his seemingly more tractable plans, and commitment to the protection of human rights - has apparently assuaged some degree of fears, as the U.S. has recently decided to allow the sale of certain weapons to Nigeria after his recent visit to Washington, DC.

Nevertheless, Nigeria - which has viewed itself as the undisputed leader of the West African region since its 1960 independence - has ostensibly learned the lesson that its reliance on the import of foreign weapons can serve as an unwanted stumbling block. Thus, the new weapons factory is intended to allow Nigeria the ability to manufacture its own arms and to augment the capabilities of its current factory in Kaduna, which produces rifles and “civilian tools.” Previously, Nigeria had garnered attention for its ambitious space program, which has sought to put a Nigerian on the moon. The new plans suggest a more achievable approach to technological self-sufficiency. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**



Nigerian soldiers shoot rifles in Bauchi. Nigeria is attempting to reduce reliance on the foreign import of arms by creating its own weapons factory.

Source: <http://horizonpost.co.ke/nigeria-to-establish-weapons-factory-buhari-says/>

**Source:** GlobalNewsNigeria. 2015. “Nigeria to Establish Weapons Factory, Says President Buhari.” *GlobalNewsNigeria (Nigeria)*. <http://globalnewsnigeria.com/2015/08/08/nigeria-to-establish-weapons-factory-says-president-buhari/>.

*Nigeria is going to establish a domestic weapons factory in an effort to cut its dependence on imported arms, President Muhammadu Buhari has said.*

*The defence ministry had been told to develop plans for a “modest military industrial complex,” the president, who came to power in May, said Nigeria has been battling the militant Islamist group Boko Haram for the last six years.*

*The US has refused to sell arms to Nigeria citing human rights abuses.*

*President Buhari told a gathering of newly graduated military officers that Nigeria “must evolve viable mechanisms for near-self-sufficiency” in defence equipment that it usually imports.*

*On a visit to Washington last month, Mr. Buhari said that the US had “aided and abetted” Boko Haram in the past by refusing to sell weapons to Nigeria. A US law prevents the government from selling arms to countries that fail to tackle human rights abuses.*

*On Tuesday, a group of visiting US Congress members said Washington could lift its ban on shipping arms to Nigeria’s military if the country improved its human rights record. The US’s stance has effectively stopped other Western countries from selling sophisticated military hardware to the country, the BBC’s Bashir Sa’ad Abdullahi reports from the capital, Abuja.*

*Nigeria’s only weapons factory in the northern city of Kaduna mainly produces rifles and civilian tools, Mr. Buhari’s spokesman Garba Shehu told the Reuters news agency.*

*He said that defence chiefs had now been asked to “re-engineer” it.*

**Source:** Wakili, Isiaka. 2015. “Nigeria: Company Presents Light Weapon Designs to Buhari.” *Daily Trust (Abuja)*. 13 August 2015. [http://allafrica.com/stories/201508140679.html?aa\\_source=nwsltr-armsandarmies-en](http://allafrica.com/stories/201508140679.html?aa_source=nwsltr-armsandarmies-en).

*The National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) yesterday presented to President Muhammadu Buhari, light weapon designs, laboratory equipment, new energy-saving lamp products and other inventions.*

*NASENI executive vice chairman and chief executive Professor Mohammed Sani Haruna led other top officials of the agency to the Presidential Villa in Abuja for the presentation.*

*In his remarks, President Buhari urged the agency to do more to publicize its inventions for the benefit of Nigerians.*

*He said unless the agency’s inventions are adopted and further developed by manufacturers, the nation and ordinary Nigerians would not enjoy the fruits of its good work.*

*“Looking at your work---the laboratory equipment, the weapons designs---these are things that can save us resources if you can coordinate with existing specialist agencies and work together,” he said. Addressing State House journalists later, NASENI boss said Buhari had directed the agency to collaborate with the Nigeria Governors’ Forum on rural electrification.*

*He said defence and investment ministries were also to liaise with the agency “such that the technologies that are mature in our system, SMEs can be supported to take these to the market”.*

## West African Terrorism and Styles of Dress

July and August 2015

*“Women in the region are forbidden from wearing the full veil until further notice, in order to prevent suicide attacks by Boko Haram.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** Clothing is becoming a security issue, especially for women in the Boko Haram-afflicted Lake Chad Basin. To that end, several states in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger, in addition to all of Chad, have banned women from wearing of the full Muslim hijab as a precautionary measure against terrorism, due to the ability of women to hide explosive devices under the long, flowing robes. In short, the Boko Haram insurgency has increasingly shown itself to be using women and girls - many of whom are assumed to have been abducted - as suicide bombers in its attacks.

Women of the predominantly Muslim region are typically dressed in the hijab, a long, flowing, full-body covering dress, and have been increasingly been concealing various types of explosives under their robes. Numerous female suicide bombings attributed to Boko Haram have occurred in the past several months, especially since Buhari's election. Underlining the utility of the hijab to hide explosives, local authorities have emphasized the prevalence of men dressing as women - with full hijab, such that only their eyes can be seen - so as to go undetected.

Yet the banning of the hijab raises numerous concerns about the curtailing of civil liberties for the pursuit of security. At the broadest level, as the first article details, critics of the new policy say that banning the hijab is an assault on religious freedoms and fundamentally undercuts rights to free practice of faith. Second, it is also the case that women are seemingly being disproportionately affected: indeed, the undergirding notion of women's modesty is being undercut, in many ways, by the new bans. Third, others wonder whether this step - radical in the eyes of many - will even be shown to produce results at stopping terrorism, and, if so, how such results are to be measured at all. As the third article notes, even with a ban on the hijab, bombers can still conceal bombs under jackets and robes. Fourth, the bans on the hijab could potentially set a dangerous precedent for curtailing civil liberties in other countries. All women wearing the hijab are now going to be subject to police interrogations. As the second article relays, even the use of motorcycles - which is a favorite vehicle of Boko Haram - has been banned in the Diffa region of Niger, and a curfew has also been imposed. Citizens of other countries who look to the experience of curfews and other bans placed on Nigerian states are all too aware just how deeply government restrictions could intrude into their daily lives. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**

**Source:** Dachen, Issac. 2015. "Should Wearing of Hijab Be Banned in Nigeria?" *The Punch (Nigeria)*. 14 July. <http://pulse.ng/gist/morning-teaser-should-wearing-of-hijab-be-banned-in-nigeria-id3970083.html>.

*It is general knowledge that most of the suicide bombings in Nigeria are reportedly carried out by young girls wearing the Islamic veil called Hijab. Even some Boko Haram men have been arrested in the past disguising themselves as woman so that they could easily hide the explosives tied around their bodies.*

*This menace has led to many calling for the banning of the Hijab veils in Nigeria, at least till the country can get out of the woods of insurgency.*

**Source:** 2015. "Full Veil Banned in Key Niger Region over Boko Haram Fears." *Yahoo News*. <http://news.yahoo.com/full-veil-banned-key-niger-region-over-boko-211408016.html>.

*Authorities in Niger's Diffa area, on the border with Nigeria, have banned the full Islamic veil following suicide attacks in countries in the region by women wearing the religious garment, an official said Wednesday.*

*"Women in the region are forbidden from wearing the full veil until further notice, in order to prevent suicide attacks by Boko Haram," Diffa mayor Hankouraou Biri-Kassoum told AFP.*

*The full veil has been banned in several regions of Cameroon after a string of bombings by women and girls, including attackers wearing the garment.*

*....On July 12, the Islamists raided Diffa prison in a likely bid to free detained members, killing a guard, according to local authorities.*

**Source:** AFP. 2015. "North Cameroon Bans Full Islamic Veil after Suicide Attacks." *The Guardian Nigeria*. 16 July. <http://www.nguardiannews.com/2015/07/north-cameroon-bans-full-islamic-veil-after-suicide-attacks/>.

*A northern region of Cameroon, which has suffered frequent attacks by the jihadist Boko Haram group, has banned the use of the full Islamic veil, governor Bakari Midjiyawa said Thursday.*

*"The full veil is completely forbidden" in the Far North region, where two women suicide attackers who were wearing the covering killed 11 people on Sunday, Midjiyawa told AFP.*

*"We have asked... police to question any woman who wears the full veil," he added.*

*On Saturday, in another sign of Boko Haram's threat to regional security, a suicide bomber disguised as a woman in a full-face veil blew himself up in Chad's capital N'Djamena, killing 15.*

*The full veil is banned in Muslim-majority Chad.*

*Midjiyawa admitted the northern Cameroon ban would not be enough to stop jihadists from committing atrocities.*

*"A terrorist can easily hide an explosive under a robe or in a jacket," he said, as he announced other bans including on tinted windows for vehicles and on motorbike traffic at night.*

*"The terrorists change strategy all the time, and we must adjust," Midjiyawa added.*

## Cameroon: How to Spot a Terrorist

30 July 2015

*“To identify a kamikaze, you should pay attention to clothing that gives the impression of a disproportionate silhouette, with the torso bigger than it should be in respect to the size of the head, the neck, and the feet.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** The fight against Boko Haram has become one that is no longer simply being waged by militaries in West Africa. Rather, everyday citizens have become part and parcel of the efforts to put an end to its reign of terror for good. To that end, a Cameroonian newspaper has recently released a “how-to” guide for citizens - derived from a recent UN compilation - on the signs that might indicate someone is a potential suicide bomber.

As detailed below, it forwards many suggestions. Look for disproportionate silhouettes, especially abnormally large torsos. Look for people wearing exceptionally heavy clothes, inappropriate for the weather. Beware of people who look excessively nervous or sweaty. Beware of people who push through crowds, or who appear to be intoxicated. Be on the lookout for people who clearly recently shaved their beards or hair, or those that have a strong smell of floral or vegetable-like odors, which are perhaps indicative of someone preparing to enter into heaven.



Suicide bombers have become a primary source of insecurity in Cameroon. Newspapers have begun to teach how to recognize a potential kamikaze. Source: <http://arynews.tv/en/female-suicide-bombers-kill-dozens-in-cameroon-nigeria>

To be sure, integrating civilians into the fight against Boko Haram has long been viewed as an imperative component of success. In Nigeria, the Civilian Joint Task Force - composed of locals in afflicted areas who would identify Boko Haram members to police or military - was noted precisely for its success. Their being embedded within the communities gave them an ear to the ground, and allowed them to notify authorities prior to attacks. Yet, some problems also arose from an overreliance of civilians in the fight against terrorism. For one, the line between official and unofficial members of government task forces became blurred, with civilians even donning government uniforms, a situation that led to the Nigerian government having to streamline its camouflage policy. (For more on this, see Warner, “Nigeria Clarifies Policy on Use of Camouflage” in the July 2015 issue of Operational Environment Watch). Moreover, it quickly became apparent that those citizens who served as informants for the government inherently placed themselves in danger of retribution if it was discovered that they had been collaborating. In short, involvement of civilians in the fight against Boko Haram and other terrorists seems to be imperative, though fine-tuning collaboration could potentially be a difficult prospect. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**

**Source:** Etoga, Nestor Nga. 015. “Cameroun - Terrorisme : Comment Reconnaître Un Kamikaze.” [Cameroon/Terrorism: How to Recognize a Kamikaze]. *Le Point Afrique*. 30 July. [http://afrique.lepoint.fr/actualites/cameroun-terrorisme-comment-reconnaître-un-kamikaze-30-07-2015-1953584\\_2365.php](http://afrique.lepoint.fr/actualites/cameroun-terrorisme-comment-reconnaître-un-kamikaze-30-07-2015-1953584_2365.php).

*...To identify a kamikaze, you should pay attention to clothing that gives the impression of a disproportionate silhouette, with the torso bigger than it should be in respect to the size of the head, the neck, and the feet. Also, pay attention to the presence of heavy and thick clothes when the weather does not call for such clothing. For example: someone wearing a pullover or rain jacket in period of extreme heat...Moreover, someone who is wearing such clothing will transpire excessively from stress and the wearing of clothes inappropriate for the climate.*

### **Watch for an abnormal gait**

*The UN recommends to “watching for someone walking in a robotic way, crisp movements, the absence or difficulty of movement of the back part of the torso, the lack of general agility caused by wearing explosives.” The kamikaze displays “a fixed stare on the objective, and thus appears uncomfortable, nervous, preoccupied, with a blank stare.” He or she can appear “very concentrated and vigilant, speaking to him/herself, at giving the impression of murmuring to someone.” He or she is indifferent*

*to words and has the attitude of someone who knows that they are condemned. For example, he or she will forget to take the change or the merchandise after a purchase.*

### **A kamikaze has signs of intoxication**

*The kamikaze will walk, with determination, towards an identified target. He will use force to make his way (to get to the goal) in pushing through a large crowd or taking a route that is deemed to be closed. A kamikaze shows signs of intoxication, someone under the influence of drugs (dilated pupils, fixed stare, or an incoherent attitude). The UN also suggests watching for people carrying bags or wearing backpacks, in which they could be carrying explosives...”*

### **Beware of people who have recently shaved.**

*Clear skin and a lighter skin color around the bottom of the face could also be a non-negligible trait. The kamikaze could have shaved his head or cut his hair with the intention of disguising himself or to present a good appearance for when he enter paradise. He or she could have an uncommon smell of perfume or cologne with notes of flowers or vegetables, which could be indicative of the desire to smell good upon entering into heaven...*

# Military Force or Negotiation? Nigeria's Options on Boko Haram

12 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** After former military ruler Muhammed Buhari won Nigeria's presidential election in March 2015, one of his first courses of action was to address the ongoing Boko Haram (now called Islamic State in West Africa) insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. He stated that he would be willing to negotiate if the militants sent legitimate representatives to meet him. However, as this excerpted French-language article for *Radio France Internationale* (RFI) points out, Chadian President Idriss Deby instead appears to be taking the leading initiative on negotiations.

According to the RFI article, President Deby announced on 11 August 2015 that Abubakr Shekau, Boko Haram's leader since 2010, was no longer in charge. Rather, a new leader, Mahamat Daud, was and was proposing negotiations. Whether Deby's assertion about Daud is credible is a separate matter.

After Boko Haram kidnapped more than 250 girls from Chibok, northeastern Nigeria, in April 2014, Deby engaged in widely praised negotiations with Danladi Ahmadu, a previously unknown leader of Boko Haram. However, it was revealed that Ahmadu was not a representative of Boko Haram or, at the least, that he had no power within the militant group. The Chibok negotiations went nowhere.

One possibility is that Daud represents a faction of Boko Haram that decided not to follow the leadership of Boko Haram, which joined with the Islamic State (ISIL) when Shekau pledged allegiance to ISIL leader Abubakar al-Baghdadi in March 2015. If this is the case, it means Daud does represent the most violent part of Boko Haram. As such, Buhari is likely left with few options but to continue the military offensive against Boko Haram because opportunities to negotiate with its legitimate representatives are minimal. Moreover, given Deby's previously unsuccessful negotiation bid, Buhari may already be skeptical of moving forward on the announcement about negotiations with Daud.

Boko Haram, in the meantime, continues to launch attacks not only in Nigeria, but increasingly in Cameroon, Niger and Chad. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

*“Though weakened, the Islamists have multiplied deadly suicide attacks in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad in recent weeks, whose armies played a key role in the fight against Boko Haram”*



Chadians will continue the battle against Boko Haram unless negotiations between Boko Haram, Chad and Nigeria lead to an agreement.

Source: <http://www.voanews.com/content/reu-chad-offers-cameroon-support-in-fight-against-boko-haram/2598677.html>

**Source:** Source: “Boko Haram est «décapité», assure le président tchadien Idriss Déby”, *RFI*, 12 August 2015.

***Boko Haram est «décapité», assure le président tchadien Idriss Déby (Chadian President Idriss Deby assures that Boko Haram is “decapitated”)***

*The Islamic State in West Africa (Boko Haram) group will be defeated before the end of the year, Chadian President assures. Chadian President Idriss Deby said that Boko Haram was “decapitated” and added that the challenge was now to “avoid terrorist actions” in the Lake Chad region.*

*For Idriss Déby, the coalition against the Islamic State in West Africa group is now able to put Boko Haram out of harm's way before the end of 2015. Deby also said Mahamat Daud took the baton of leadership from Abubakar Shekau. The new head of Boko Haram asked the Nigerian government to establish a dialogue.*

*Though weakened, the Islamists have multiplied deadly suicide attacks in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad in recent weeks, whose armies played a key role in the fight against Boko Haram.*

# Buhari and the “Encirclement” Counterinsurgency Strategy

31 July 2015

*“President Muhammadu Buhari has observed that Nigeria and its neighbouring countries must work together as one if they must defeat and degrade Boko Haram terrorists in the sub-region.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** Nigerian President Muhammed Buhari’s decisions in his first months as president show that his strategy to defeat Boko Haram can be most accurately defined as encirclement. From a doctrinal perspective, this does not mean complete physical encirclement of Boko Haram’s area of operations in the Lake Chad region. However, it does require that Nigerian and regional forces are more able to exert control over the entire perimeter of – and decisive points within – the Lake Chad region.

Buhari has moved the Army command from the Nigerian capital of Abuja in the center of the country to Maiduguri, which is the capital of Borno State, in the far northeast of the country near Cameroon, Niger and Chad, where nearly 90% of Boko Haram’s attacks have taken place. This will allow the Nigerian Army to better coordinate military operations with neighboring countries and contain Boko Haram in a confined operational area. This is in contrast to the current situation, where Boko Haram crosses borders, chooses when and where to engage regional armies, and defines the area of operations.

The excerpted article in *Leadership* states that Buhari also took steps to resolve a long-standing issue between Nigeria and its neighbor Cameroon that has plagued the two countries’ cooperation: border security. Some formerly disputed territories are now part of Cameroon as a result of International Court of Justice rulings, but this has left resentment among Nigerians. Because of this bilateral dispute, neither Nigeria nor Cameroon has allowed the other country to cross the border to pursue Boko Haram militants. Boko Haram has exploited this and created a border region safe haven for the militants.

According to the article, Buhari has vowed to not revisit the border disputes. This means that the two countries can let bygones be bygones and that the new Army command in Maiduguri will be empowered to order troops to pursue Boko Haram militants, even if they flee into Cameroon. This is one of the key aspects needed for the encirclement strategy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

**Source:** Source: “Buhari, Biya Resolve Nigeria/Cameroon Border Demarcation” *Leadership*, 31 July 2015.

## ***Buhari, Biya Resolve Nigeria/Cameroon Border Demarcation***

*President Muhammadu Buhari and his Cameroonian counterpart, President Paul Biya resolved to ensure that the demarcation of the land border between Nigeria and Cameroon is completed before the end of the year. A communiqué issued at the conclusion of President Buhari’s official visit to Cameroon, noted that both leaders expressed satisfaction with the progress made so far in the exercise being undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations. They agreed to endorse the recommendation of the United Nations Secretary-General on the completion before the end of 2015, of the land border demarcation work, in order to concentrate on enhancing cross-border cooperation.*

*According to it, Buhari and Biya agreed to strengthen security collaboration along their common border under the auspices of the Nigeria-Cameroon Trans-Border Security Committee and within the framework of the implementation of the concept of strategic operations approved at the Abuja Summit. They reaffirmed their determination to strengthen cooperation with other neighbouring countries for the rapid elimination of terrorism and other security threats.*

*President Muhammadu Buhari has observed that Nigeria and its neighbouring countries must work together as one if they must defeat and degrade Boko Haram terrorists in the sub-region.*



New Nigerian president Muhammed Buhari is planning for a new regional approach to countering the Boko Haram insurgency.  
Source: <http://www.voanews.com/content/nigeria-buhari-profile/2685708.html>

## More Anti-Rousseff Protests in Brazil

21 August 2015

*“...Some even called for a military intervention.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** Brazilians in opposition to the socialist government of Dilma Rousseff went to the streets in large number again this month, although apparently not with as much strength as in the recent past. The total sizes of the convocations may or may not be indicative of the current force of the protest movement, because the building of participation in such events often owes to a number of other cultural and environmental factors.

Interesting this time around, however, is the active participation of the main opposition party, giving the events an odd dimension of institutional legitimacy. Also of note, especially to OE Watch regulars, is what seems to have been an increased presence of open messages within the demonstrations calling for military intervention to oust the regime, an idea that has a difficult reputation in Brazil. Having moved beyond its 20th century history of military coups and military governments had seemed an article of faith among Brazilians. While something to keep an eye on, the percentage of participants adhering to such a message is yet quite small. On the other hand, other protest marchers do not seem to have actively protested that current of thinking within the protests. The argument seems to be that, while a military coup would be awful, the level of corruption to which the current government has sunk is considered less tolerable still. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

**Source:** Felipe Betim, “Rousseff afronta otra protesta masiva para pedir su destitución” (Rousseff faces another massive protest asking for her removal), August 17, 2015, [http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:bcc8lnVcNW0J:internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/08/16/actualidad/1439752775\\_369562.html&safe=active&hl=en&gl=us&strip=1&vwsrc=0](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:bcc8lnVcNW0J:internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/08/16/actualidad/1439752775_369562.html&safe=active&hl=en&gl=us&strip=1&vwsrc=0)

*...Some even called for a military intervention.*

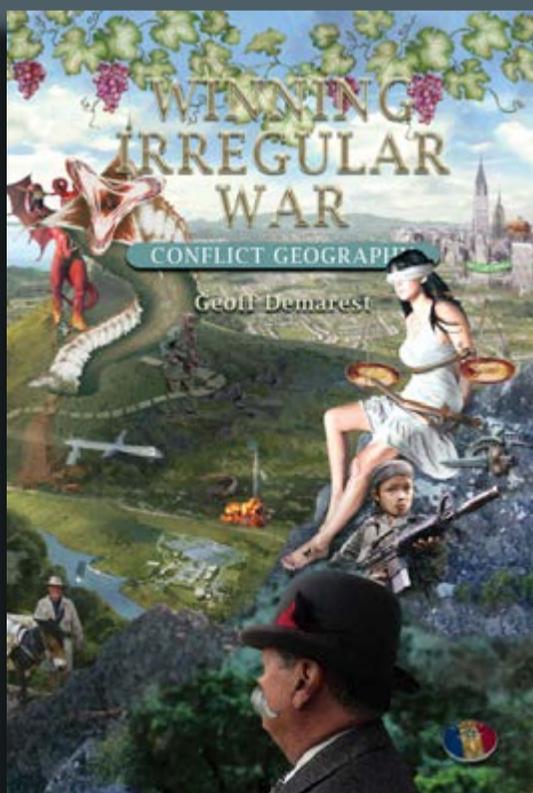
*All said, the protests against the government (Rousseff is only six months into this second term) have lost steam compared to those celebrated March 15 and April 12. There are no firm numbers, but the informal calculation of the Military Police is of some 8000,000 participants in the demonstrations in the whole country...*

*...some 100,000 persons formed a yellow and green sea that moved along the Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro. The majority called for [her] removal. Some even called for a military intervention.*

**Source:** Pedro Brieger, “La columna de Pedro Brieger: crisis institucional en Brasil” (The Pedro Brieger column: institutional crisis in Brazil), *El Destape*, August 21, 2015, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:J3XiVT3mHBEJ:www.eldestapeweb.com/la-columna-pedro-brieger-crisis-institucional-brasil-n9067&safe=active&hl=en&gl=us&strip=1&vwsrc=0>

*...in this case...the main opposition party... is revving the call for removal...*

*The magnitude of the crisis the government of President Dilma Rousseff is going through is not manifested by the mobilizations in opposition to her, although these are multiple and massive....The problem in this case is that the main opposition party, the Brazilian Social Democrat Party (PSDB), which lost the last two presidential elections, is revving the call for removal of the president in a clear effort at destabilizing the government and provoking its fall....It is hard to believe that Cardoso, who was exiled from Brazil by the military that governed after the coup d'état in 1964, is asking for the resignation of the president when many of those who are out in the streets have posters openly calling for a military intervention, or vindicate the coup....*



**Geoff Demarest's *Winning Irregular War* is about a broader set of conflicts than just 'insurgency.' In its 144 sections, Geoff Demarest raises new and overlooked concepts related to modern conflict in a provocative manner designed to stir up debate and critical thinking. As Geoff Demarest puts it: "I hope that some of the ideas in it will be contagious."**

## Venezuelan Health Care Perhaps in Crisis

21 August 2015

### OE Watch Commentary:

The numbers of reports of a medical crisis in Venezuela are seemingly on the rise, and the read appears to be increasingly dire. None of the trends are promising. Not only are critical medicines apparently running out, so are basic cleaning and hygiene products. News of a mass death of babies in a major regional hospital is perhaps bringing the tragedy more international attention, but soon the situation in Venezuela may demand center stage.

The health system in Venezuela has been tied somewhat to that of Cuba, since the two governments began an oil-for-doctors deal. While the oil may have helped the Cuban regime, the Venezuelan health system is apparently in a precipitous collapse. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

*“...A supervisory nurse explained that the appearance of possums is normal in the hospital... but there is no reason to be alarmed...”*

**Source:** Diego Sánchez de la Cruz, Las diez claves del desastre sanitario que sufre Venezuela (The ten keys to the health disaster that Venezuela is suffering), *Libre Mercado*, August 7 2015, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:gK2VK0DY0zcJ:www.libremercado.com/2015-08-07/las-diez-claves-del-desastre-sanitario-que-sufre-venezuela-1276554442/&safe=active&hl=en&gl=us&strip=1&vwsr=0>

*... the majority of medicines included in the essentials list by the World Health Organization cannot be found in Venezuelan pharmacies...*

*The International Crisis Group just published what is a demolishing report about Venezuela. According to that organization, specializing in the analysis of conflicts at the global level, the deterioration of the health system that the country government by Nicolás Maduro is experiencing is so alarming that it can be compared to situations observed in places where there are armed confrontations or natural disasters...*

*In May the Medical Federation of Venezuela revealed that 12,830 doctors had left their posts in public health. In fact, 8,000 of these professionals left the country. As a consequence, there are twelve medical specialties which are now in ‘red numbers’ due to the lack of human team...*

*For its part, Doctors for Health informed in May of this same year that the majority of medicines included in the essentials list by the World Health Organization cannot be found in Venezuelan pharmacies...*

**Source:** Dólar Today, “GENOCIDIO SOCIALISTA: Mueren 17 bebés en una semana en un hospital de Venezuela” (Socialist Genocide: 17 babies die in one week in a hospital in Venezuela), *Dólar Today*, August 21 2015, <https://dolartoday.com/genocidio-socialista-mueren-17-bebes-en-una-semana-en-un-hospital-de-venezuela/>

*Seventeen babies recently died in one week -- ten of them during the last weekend- in the University Hospital Dr. Luis Razetti in the city of Barcelona, Venezuela, capital of Anzoátegui state, according to revelations made by parents of patients in the neonatal ward...A supervisory nurse explained that the appearance of possums is normal in the hospital; that there is an invasion of that type of rodent, but there is no reason to be alarmed. We think the presence of that animal is contributing to the contamination of the area, she said.*



Pediatric Specialty Hospital of Maracaibo

Source: The Photographer - Own work. Licensed under CC0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pediatric\\_Specialty\\_Hospital\\_of\\_Maracaibo.jpg#/media/File:Pediatric\\_Specialty\\_Hospital\\_of\\_Maracaibo.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pediatric_Specialty_Hospital_of_Maracaibo.jpg#/media/File:Pediatric_Specialty_Hospital_of_Maracaibo.jpg)

## Colombian Peace Process Confusion

18 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** The negotiations that the FARC is conducting with the Colombian government in Cuba have apparently developed a number of features disconcerting to more than a few Colombians, perhaps the majority of them. FARC leaders are apparently insisting in interviews that they will do no jail time (which the FARC leaders classify as ‘illogical’), that they will not give up their weapons until the Colombian Army does the same, that FARC troops and families are to be considered victims of the war as much as anyone else, and that the Colombian government is just as guilty of perpetrating crimes as is the FARC.

The FARC attitude about the negotiations seems ratified and rewarded by the developing terms of the agreement, and that attitude is one of moral and political parity with the government. According to many Colombian opinion writers, if too much of this interpretation is accurate, peace in Colombia is not going to be the outcome of the so-called peace process, however the term peace might be defined. The FARC also has gone so far as to demand that the government no longer deride communism, that is to say, the government is to stop and prohibit anti-communist speech and teaching.

Perhaps a majority of Colombians are wondering what happened on the way to a FARC surrender. Given the precipitous collapse of Venezuela’s economy and society—along with the notably tight Bolivarian alliance among the FARC, the Venezuelan government and the Cuban government—more than a few Colombians are worried that Colombia may follow those countries down the Bolivarian economic and human rights drain. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

“...the government negotiators...continue not to understand the strategic plan of the FARC...”

**Source:** Colombian News, “En La Habana no se está negociando la paz de Colombia” (They are not negotiating Colombian peace in Havana), *Periodico Debate*, 15 August, 2015, <http://periodicodebate.com/index.php/welcome/item/9335-en-la-habana-no-se-est%C3%A1-negociando-la-paz-de-colombia>; CandiCat, “EN CUBA NO SE ESTA FIRMANDO NINGUNA PAZ ... SANTOS MIENTE DE NUEVO!” (In Cuba they are not signing any peace agreement... Santos lies again!), *YouTube*, 15 August, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mra40HgRO0&feature=youtu.be>

*Interview with Rodrigo Granda, member of the FARC’s top leadership. Ricardo González, or Ricardo Téllez, alias Rodrigo Granda, of Colombian-Venezuelan nationality, is a member of the Colombian Communist Party and member of the FARC since 1989. The terrorist chief again insists: the FARC is not considering turning in its weapons. Granda reaffirms that “the weapons should disappear,” but their weapons and also the weapons of the Colombian public forces. The man seeks the dismantling of the the Colombian institutions and the Colombian state itself.*

**Source:** Luis Alberto Villamarín Pulido, “Diciente carta de las Farc a Santos” (Telling latter from the FARC to Santos), *Luisvillamarín.com*, 18 August, 2015, <http://www.luisvillamarin.com/defensa-nacional-y-seguridad-nacional/1083-diciente-carta-de-las-farc-a-santos.html>

*The message of the FARC leadership confirms that the conversation agenda gravitates around the unilateral imposition and management of time orchestrated by [FARC leader] Iván Márquez; the government negotiators not only aren’t ideal but after three years continue not to understand the strategic plan of the FARC; [the negotiators of the FARC] are not going to get up from the table as long as they have [chief government negotiator] De la Calle and his unproductive team psychologically kidnapped....*



No más secuestros, no más FARC (No more kidnappings, no more FARC).  
Source: by equinoXio - Licensed under CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:No\\_m%C3%A1s\\_secuestros,\\_no\\_m%C3%A1s\\_FARC\\_\(2243229000\).jpg#/media/File:No\\_m%C3%A1s\\_secuestros,\\_no\\_m%C3%A1s\\_FARC\\_\(2243229000\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:No_m%C3%A1s_secuestros,_no_m%C3%A1s_FARC_(2243229000).jpg#/media/File:No_m%C3%A1s_secuestros,_no_m%C3%A1s_FARC_(2243229000).jpg)

## “War Taxes” Imposed by Street Gangs Debilitate Small Businesses in Honduras

August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Extortion is a tactic commonly used by drug cartels, gangs, and criminal organizations in Mexico and Central America. Depending on the region and intervention methods used by authorities, this activity can be a nuisance or, in worse cases, may effectively paralyze business activities, as is the case in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Here, groups such as the Barrio 18, MS-13, Los Chirizos, Los Benjamines, El combo que no de deja, and Los Vatos Locos are terrorizing small businesses by imposing a “war tax” (impuesto de guerra), as reported by this source. Taxes charged by these gangs range from \$(USD) 20-200 per month for street vendors and small businesses, but may be much higher for large companies. This source further reported that rampant extortion has virtually shut down business activity in some sectors of the city, especially markets.

In one previously popular downtown market all that is left is a handful of vendors surrounded by hundreds of empty stands that are up for sale—around 450 to be exact. Faced with extortion fees and death threats for those who cannot pay, many vendors simply abandoned their stands. The few that remain have done so out of financial necessity.

Customers are also frequent victims of assault at central markets, which has prompted many to simply stop going. Hence, the mix of a small customer base and widespread extortion has resulted in the near closure of many once popular markets in Tegucigalpa. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

**Source:** “Con “impuesto de guerra”, las pandillas arrasan pequeños negocios en Honduras (War Taxes Imposed by Street Gangs Debilitate Small Businesses in Honduras).” *La Prensa*. Accessed from <http://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/839403-417/con-impuesto-de-guerra-las-pandillas-arrasan-pequenos-negocios-en-honduras>

### **Most Powerful Gangs**

*“The most powerful street gangs such as the Barrio 18, the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), Los Chirizos, Los Benjamines, El combo que no se deja, and Vatos locos have laid siege to business owners and local residents in Tegucigalpa where more than 1 million people live.”*

### **Effects of Extortion and Consequences of Non-Payment**

*“Extortion is affecting everyone and the consequences are not just economic, they are also physical and psychological. The victims can be judges, political representatives, farmers, bus drivers, market vendors, or small business owners. Instead of letting this activity destroy them, many choose to leave neighborhoods controlled by gangs and some are even leaving the country completely according Anti-Extortion Police Officer Fausto Rodríguez.”*

*“Those who cannot pay (extortions) are killed. Even those who do pay are sometimes killed to send a message.” This statement was made by a police officers.*

### **Market Abandonment**

*“Almost all the market vendors have left. They prefer to leave before being killed or having to pay war taxes.” This statement was made by a 30-year-old female who wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons.*

*“Those who have left (market vendors) have not come back out of fear. These are hardworking people, but they cannot work. The war tax is debilitating businesses because they cannot pay.” This statement was made by a former street vendor from Tegucigalpa.*

## 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>**



# Narcos Steal an Average of Six Weapons a Day from Police in Mexico

July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Narcos and other criminal organizations in Mexico are known to possess the same as or even better firepower than police and soldiers for at least two separate reasons. First, they are able to allocate more funds to purchase weapons than smaller organizations such as the Municipal Police may have. Second, they are adept at stealing high-powered weapons directly from government-controlled police and military armories either by force or with the complicity of security personnel. Take, for example, the 26 September 2010 theft of 69 high-powered weapons from a Control and Communications Center in Chihuahua. In this case, eight narcos wearing police clothing gained access to the armory after security guards let the vehicle they were traveling in pass through the gates without inspection. After entering, they stole all the weapons in less than six minutes and quickly fled the scene. This example is just one of many, but highlights the manner in which cartels are able to quickly and efficiently steal weapons directly from police and military armories with little-to-no resistance.

This source stated that narcos steal an average of six weapons from police daily, with the highest levels of theft being reported in Mexico State, Guerrero, Durango, Jalisco, and the Federal District. In the Federal District alone, Sedena reported the theft of 4,570 weapons between 2006 and 2013. During this same time frame over 15,000 weapons were stolen nationwide. Not surprisingly, those states with the highest levels of theft also have significant police and military presence, meaning that the concentration of weapons is superior to those states with less cartel violence, such as San Luis Potosi, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, and Yucatan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

**Source:** Las bajas en las armas de los policías en México: pierden 6 al día (Narcos Steal Six Weapons a Day from Police in Mexico).” Animal Politico. Accessed from <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2015/05/policias-en-mexico-pierden-seis-armas-de-fuego-al-dia-ya-van-15-mil-robadas-o-extraviadas/>

*From 2006 to present, narcos have stolen more than 15,000 weapons from police (federal, state, municipal) in Mexico as reported by the National Security Commission. Of these weapons, more than 30% were identified as rifles, machine guns, submachine guns, and shotguns. The Mexican Army has also been subject to large scale theft and is reporting the loss of 300 machine guns, rifles, and grenades (40 fragmentation and 95 anti-tank) since 2008. Sedena further reported the theft of artillery equipment and other weapons including MK-19 grenade launchers, G-3 automatic weapons, and M-16 rifles. Still, many open source channels claim that police and military estimates regarding weapon theft may be too low as there are no accurate records that account for loss between 2000 and 2006.*

## **Weapon Theft by State**

*States with the highest levels of reported weapon theft include the Federal District, Mexico State and Guerrero where nearly half of all losses were reported; 4,570, 1,746 and 1,600 respectively. One factor that could account for higher than average theft in the Federal District and Mexico State is that these regions have the highest concentration of Federal Police in the nation with more than 100,000 active officers. As for Guerrero, the state has been under continued conflict with cartel in-fighting and the emergence of civil self-defense groups. These emerging factors have warranted higher numbers of police and soldiers in the state, hence, a higher weapons supply for these groups to target.*



Assault rifles

Source: by Jan Hrdonka - Own work. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Assault\\_rifles.jpg#/media/File:Assault\\_rifles.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Assault_rifles.jpg#/media/File:Assault_rifles.jpg)

# Forced Deportation of Colombian Nationals from Venezuela Causes Refugee Problem

July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Venezuela's western border with Colombia spans 2,200 kilometers and is deemed by many as a smuggler's paradise. This is because subsidies and fixed pricing by the Venezuelan government have created a lucrative black market dedicated to selling goods below market price in Colombia. Of particularly high value is petrol, as 50 liters (11 gallons) can be purchased for as little as \$1.00 in Venezuela. In Colombia, a single liter sells for approximately \$1.20. Food, although not readily accessible, is also much cheaper in Venezuela, which is why an estimated 40% of government-subsidized rations are smuggled across the border and resold in Colombia.

One way the Venezuelan government has attempted to counteract this situation is by closing its shared border with Colombia between 10 pm and 5 am daily. Approximately 17,000 soldiers are also in place at blockades leading up to the border, but, as stated by this source, National Guard soldiers readily accept bribes to turn a blind eye to illegal activity.

While smuggling and food shortages have been problematic in Venezuela for years, the government just recently began associating these issues with the millions of Colombian nationals living in the country (both legally and illegally). In what the Venezuelan government is calling an attempt to "mitigate loss," mass deportation campaigns have been enacted, with more than 2,500 cases reported in 2015 alone. This number represents a significant increase from 2014, when 1,772 Colombian nationals were deported. At present, discussions are being held to find acceptable means to humanely control the immigration issue, but, in the meantime, mass deportation remains in full effect. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

**Source:** Deportados, el nuevo diferendo con Venezuela (Forced Deportation of Colombian Nationals from Venezuela Causes Refugee Problems)." *La Semana*. Accessed from <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/deportados-el-nuevo-diferendo-con-venezuela/428892-3>

*Colombia's Foreign Relations Minister recently met with Venezuelan immigration officials to discuss the mass deportation of Colombian nationals from Venezuela and to ensure that human rights of the deportees are not violated. The hope is that a solution will be found to enact protocols which will protect the rights of Colombians currently living in Venezuela and to end large scale deportation campaigns. In the meantime, deportations remain in full effect and many Colombians are reporting that they have been torn from their homes and families without even a chance to say goodbye. Once sent back to Colombia, anyone who re-enters into Venezuela illegally faces a possible 15-year prison sentence.*

*During the first five months of 2015, more than 2,500 Colombian nationals have already been deported and more than 90% of these individuals were sent back to their native country with just the clothes they were wearing at the time of their arrest. As reported by the President of the Venezuelan National Assembly, many of those individuals being deported are in some way involved in crimes including the sale of petrol and food on the black market and that these actions are accelerating the "economic war" that Venezuela is currently facing. There is also concern that Colombians living in Venezuela illegally are further depleting the already scarce food supply in the country. For this reason, arrests are commonly carried out at food stands or grocery stores.*



IRS/Customs bureau in Paraguachón, on the venezuelan side of the Venezuela-Colombia border

Source: "Acheja sut Netsee Wnesueela2012-10-28 14.48.24" by Leonfd1992 - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Acheja\\_sut\\_Netsee\\_Wnesueela2012-10-28\\_14.48.24.jpg#/media/File:Acheja\\_sut\\_Netsee\\_Wnesueela2012-10-28\\_14.48.24.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Acheja_sut_Netsee_Wnesueela2012-10-28_14.48.24.jpg#/media/File:Acheja_sut_Netsee_Wnesueela2012-10-28_14.48.24.jpg)

# The Fragile Miracle that is Ciudad Juarez

July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** The miracle of Ciudad Juarez has been celebrated for over three years as a great success story in reducing drug-cartel-related violence and restoring peace, but there are indicators that trouble may be resurfacing. Between 2008 and 2012 the Juarez and Sinaloa Cartels terrorized this border town, with murder levels so high that it was classified as the most violent city in the world for three years straight (2010-2012). In 2010, the murder rate in Juarez averaged 300 per month, and government spending to combat violence exceeded all-time highs and even involved a complete purge of corrupt municipal and ministerial police. In 2012 violence levels began to drop, as the Sinaloa Cartel appeared to have finally won its war against the Juarez Cartel, but in the last three years the Chihuahua-based Juarez Cartel has begun restructuring itself with new leadership and is once again looking to re-establish old connections with corrupt officials, as reported by this source. In doing so, the Juarez Cartel is looking to take back key drug-trafficking territories now controlled by the Sinaloa Cartel in the Juarez Valley, which runs parallel to the Rio Bravo. The arrest of Sinaloa Cartel leader El Chapo Guzman in 2014 left leadership in the region without direction, and this source reports that the Juarez Cartel has successfully recruited top Sinaloa lieutenants. Other indicators that the Juarez Cartel is back are a series of homicides and shoot-outs in the Golden Triangle and the murders of Sinaloa Cartel supporters in Ciudad Juarez, allegedly perpetrated by La Linea (the armed group of the Juarez Cartel).

What remains to be seen is whether or not the Juarez Cartel will be successful in reclaiming lost territories and the approach it will take to do it, as this source indicates that violence may not be its key strategy, as was the case in the previous fight. Instead, there are thoughts that the attempted take-over may be much more subtle this time around so as not to draw so much national and international attention to the situation. In a city where life is finally turning back to normal after years of violence, many residents and businesses are simply hoping for continued peace and the freedom to walk the streets without fear of being caught in the cross-fire of cartel confrontations.

**End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

**Source:** "If Ciudad Juarez Is 'Back,' Why Haven't the Killings Stopped?" *Vice News*. Accessed on July 29, 2015 from <https://news.vice.com/article/if-ciudad-juarez-is-back-why-havent-the-killings-stopped>

*"The "rebirth" of Ciudad Juarez might just be a temporary phenomenon. Some believe that before the year is up, the war will return. The information that I have is that the Juarez Cartel is returning to take control again, because the Sinaloa Cartel is weak. They are gasping and drowning. There are also indicators that a faction of the Beltrán Leyva Cartel and Los Zetas is supporting the Juarez Cartel."*

**Source:** El frágil milagro de Juárez (The Fragile Miracle that is Ciudad Juarez)." *Animal Politico*. Accessed on July 29, 2015 from <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2015/05/el-fragil-milagro-de-juarez/>

*The Juarez Cartel has deep roots in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua. It was expected that one day leaders from the organization would re-group and try to take back what was once theirs. The arrest of El Chapo Guzman in February 2014 opened an opportunity for the Juarez Cartel as Sinaloa Cartel operatives running the Juarez Valley operations were left without any instruction. The Juarez Cartel is also taking back some of their old territories by convincing Sinaloa Cartel Lieutenants to switch sides.*

*A second factor that could cause violence levels to spike again is the impending release of hundreds of La Linea and Barrio Azteca (armed groups working at the service of the Sinaloa and Juarez Cartels) members. Prisons within Ciudad Juarez are grossly overpopulated and many who should have received life sentences are serving short terms and will be released in the coming years.*



2010 Ciudad Juarez Mexico

Source: by Astrid Bussink from Queens, New York, USA - juarez 7. Licensed under CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2010\\_Ciudad\\_Juarez\\_Mexico\\_5161384085.jpg#/media/File:2010\\_Ciudad\\_Juarez\\_Mexico\\_5161384085.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2010_Ciudad_Juarez_Mexico_5161384085.jpg#/media/File:2010_Ciudad_Juarez_Mexico_5161384085.jpg)

## Thailand Continues to Build up its UAV Capability

1 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Three months ago Thai media sources reported that Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Prawi Wongsuwan gave an unspecified number of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), most likely Mini-UAVs, to the Royal Thai Army. The purpose of the UAVs was reportedly for patrolling, watching, intelligence, spying, and examining geographical features.

More recently a report came out talking about plans by the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) to create two UAV squadrons. According to the highlighted article, these squadrons would be the first of their kind in Thailand. It is believed that the squadrons will be based at Wing 4 in Nakhon Sawan, which is made up of four squadrons containing fighter jets and patrol aircraft. The plan is to decommission the fleet of three Arava patrol aircraft, which had been purchased from Israel 36 years ago, and turn Squadrons 402 and 404 of the wing into squadrons for the UAVs, therefore eliminating the few old Arava patrol aircraft.

The RTAF reportedly has some UAVs already in service. However, the exact number is unknown. It is interesting to note that Thailand is beefing up its capability in UAVs. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

*“...the UAV units will be deployed once the Arava planes have been removed.”*

**Source:** “Air Force Beefs Up Its Unmanned Vehicle Units,” *Bangkok Post*, 1 August 2015, <<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/security/640376/air-force-beefs-up-its-unmanned-vehicle-units>>.

### ***Air Force Beefs Up Its Unmanned Vehicle Units***

*The Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) plans to create two squadrons of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV)s, the first of their kind in Thailand, pending budget approval.*

*Air Force Commander ACM Tritos Sonchaeng said the squadrons will be based at Wing 4 in Nakhon Sawan, which is currently made up of four squadrons of Lead-in jet fighters, F-16 fighter jets, and Arava patrol aircraft.*

...

*Squadrons 402 and 404 of the wing will be turned into squadrons for the UAVs.*

*An air force source said the UAV units will be deployed once the Arava planes have been removed.*

## Former Separatists in Aceh, Indonesia Are Ready to Join Islamic State

1 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Former separatists from the Free Aceh Movement in Aceh, Indonesia, have expressed interest in joining the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. According to excerpts from the accompanying article in *Kompas*, Din Robot, a former deputy commander for the Free Aceh Movement, stated that more than 100 former combatants plan to join ISIS to achieve economic stability for members and their families. He says, “Me and my friends are ready to join and leave for Syria to become ISIS soldiers. Definitely, we are ready to join ISIS.”

Joining the Islamic State is a surprising turn of events and a new direction for the Free Aceh Movement. Following its 2005 peace agreement with the government of Indonesia, it surrendered its separatist intentions and dissolved its armed wing. Since then, it has discontinued its past activities and has aimed to be a functioning part of civil society in Aceh.

As the article points out, Robot says that going to Syria is “more promising to support his family... than committing crime and chaos.” The rich get richer and the poor get poorer in Indonesia. “We do not get the support from the government,” says Robot.

In a separate accompanying article from *Kompas*, Head of the Criminal Investigation Police Commissioner General Budi Waseso comments on Robot’s plans to join the Islamic State. He says that interest among Free Aceh Movement separatists is only chatter and he is not too sure that 100 former combatants really want to join ISIS. Although Waseso describes Robot’s statements as only chatter, the potential ramifications of more than 100 former combatants from the Free Aceh Movement joining the Islamic State should not be dismissed. **End OE Watch Commentary (Ortiz)**

**Source:** “100 Kombatant GAM Akan Bergabung dengan ISIS,” *Kompas*, 9 July 2015, <http://regional.kompas.com/read/2015/07/09/17185041/100.Kombatant.GAM.Akan.Bergabung.dengan.ISIS>

*Surprising information from East Aceh is that a number of former fighters of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), which is led by Fakhruddin bin Kasem also known as Robot Din, expressed readiness to join the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).*

*They also expressed readiness to leave for Syria. Robot Din who ... a former deputy commander of GAM Territory ... .*

*Asked how many members who intend to join with ISIS, according to Din Robots, already more than 100 people.*

*“Me and my friends are ready to join and leave for Syria to become soldiers ISIS,” said Din Robot.*

*According to Robot, today the rich get richer and the poor poorer. “We do not get the attention of the government,” said Din Robot.*

*According to Din Robot, they are better off to Syria to join ISIS because it is more promising to support his family rather than committing crime and chaos,*

*“Definitely, we are ready to join with ISIS,” said Din Robot.*

**Source:** “Seratusan Mantan Anggota GAM Ingin Gabung ISIS, Ini Komentar Kabareskrim,” *Kompas*, 9 July 2015, <http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2015/07/09/19355491/Seratusan.Mantan.Anggota.GAM.Ingin.Gabung.ISIS.Ini.Komentar.Kabareskrim>

*Budi was not too sure one hundred former combatants really want to join ISIS.*

*“Don’t listen to the chatter,” said Budi.*

# Uyghur Militants are the Latest Signs of Terrorist Activity in Central Sulawesi: Indonesian Authorities Step Up Counterterrorism

2 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** An Indonesian court jailed a Chinese Uyghur for six years after he and three other members were caught trying to join an Islamic extremist group led by the country’s most wanted militant. According to excerpts in the accompanying article, Ahmed Bozoglan was sentenced after his arrest in September 2014 when he attempted to meet Santoso, the leader of a group known as the Eastern Indonesia Mujahideen, based in Poso, Central Sulawesi. According to news archives from the *Jakarta Globe*, the arrest of Bozoglan and the three other members brings the number to at least sixteen arrests linked to militants based in Central Sulawesi since March: in addition to these four, another four militants were arrested that month for providing logistical support and food to Santoso. Then, in May, Densus 88, the elite police counterterrorism squad, arrested six alleged terrorists after a deadly shootout in Poso.

As the excerpt points out, Eastern Indonesia Mujahideen, which hides out in the jungle in an area known as a militant hotbed, is considered one of the few remaining extremist groups that pose a serious threat in Indonesia. Santoso’s group has been accused of deadly attacks on police and has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.

As the excerpts point out, Indonesian authorities have also strengthened their capabilities to root out members of the Eastern Indonesia Mujahideen. In June the Indonesian military joined the pursuit by launching the Joint Special Operations Command to work together with Densus 88. This command brings together highly skilled army, navy and air force units and is designed to mobilize and deploy quickly to any part of the archipelagic country, extending the military’s reach into an area that was reserved for police. Before its official debut, the joint force trained for weeks in the militant hotbed of Poso, Central Sulawesi. **End OE Watch Commentary (Ortiz)**



Indonesian Soldiers

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indonesia\\_Army\\_soldiers.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indonesia_Army_soldiers.jpg).

**Source:** “Indonesia jails Uighur over attempt to join militants,” *The Jakarta Post*, 29 July 2015, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/07/29/indonesia-jails-uighur-over-attempt-join-militants.html#sthash.jSjUYnG3.dpuf>

*An Indonesian court Wednesday jailed a Chinese Uighur for six years after he was caught trying to join an Islamic extremist group led by the country’s most wanted militant.*

*Ahmed Bozoglan was arrested last September on the rugged central island of Sulawesi as he and three other members of the mostly Muslim ethnic minority attempted to meet militant Santoso, leader of a group known as the Eastern Indonesia Mujahideen.*

*The three others were jailed for six years each earlier this month.*

*Santoso’s group, which hides out in the jungle in an area known as a militant hotbed, is considered one of the few remaining extremist outfits that pose a serious threat in Indonesia and has been accused of deadly attacks on police.*

*Santoso has also pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group.*

**Source:** “Densus 88 Arrests 6 Alleged Terrorists After Deadly Poso Shootout,” *Jakarta Globe*, 25 May 2015, <http://thejakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/news/densus-88-arrests-6-alleged-terrorists-deadly-poso-shootout/>

**Source:** “Police Arrest Four Men Over Alleged Link to Terrorist Santoso,” *Jakarta Globe*, 6 March 2015, <http://thejakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/news/police-arrest-four-men-alleged-link-terrorist-santoso/>

*The group were arrested in the extremist stronghold for allegedly providing logistical support and food to Santoso. Authorities are still searching for Santoso and another MIT leader, Daeng Koro.*

**Source:** “Indonesia Inaugurates Special Force to Fight Terrorism,” *Benar News*, 9 June 2015, <http://www.benarnews.org/english/news/indonesian/special-force-06092015181200.html>

*Indonesia on Tuesday launched an elite counterterrorism force that extends the military’s reach into an area reserved for police until now.*

*The Joint Special Operations Command brings together “highly skilled” army, navy and air force units and is designed to mobilize and deploy quickly to any part of the archipelagic country, ...*

*It will work with Densus 88, the elite police counterterrorism squad, ... Before its official debut the joint force trained for weeks in Poso, a remote and mountainous area in Central Sulawesi province with a high concentration of militants, ...*

## Manila Sees a United Front as the Solution in the South China Sea

4 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** The accompanying article from *The Manila Times* points out that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) believe that a united front will prevent China from its island-building spree in the South China Sea. According to the article, if all ASEAN members and Japan agree to issue a united stand against Beijing's sea activities, China will discontinue its dredging activities in a number of reefs that are also being claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Japan.

As the excerpt indicates, the AFP see a united front as a realistic solution to the country's dispute with China over the South China Sea. "In this part of the region, a collective voice is much stronger than a few. The whole of Asia, ASEAN is a very strong voice. If [Asian nations] can [stay] together, much better," said Col. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesman. He said other countries are hesitant to speak out against China because they are protecting their interests, particularly on the economic front. He suggested that China would not apply economic sanctions on these countries because Beijing is also dependent on trade.

As the excerpt points out, ASEAN-China relations are largely very stable at the moment, since ASEAN-China relations have always been focused on more than just the South China Sea. Such ties were further strengthened with the ASEAN support for the recent Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank initiative by the world's second largest economy.

While a united front may be possible to create, its future impact on ASEAN-China relations over the South China Sea dispute is unknown. Right now there has yet to be an impact as a result of other potential resolutions. The Declaration of Conduct, signed in 2002 by China and all ASEAN countries, was the first step toward unity by issuing a legal doctrine, but has yet to resolve the dispute. Currently, the ASEAN-China Code of Conduct and the UN Tribunal in The Hague are works-in-progress. **End OE Watch Commentary (Ortiz)**

**Source:** "One Asean Stand May Stop China," *The Manila Times*, 2 August 2015, <http://www.manilatimes.net/one-asean-stand-may-stop-china/205853/>

### **10-nation bloc urged to protest land reclamation**

*THERE is a chance that China will stop its island-building spree in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) and other areas if all members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and Japan agree to issue a united stand against Beijing's sea activities, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said.*

*"In this part of the region, a collective voice is much stronger than a few. The whole of Asia, Asean is a very strong voice. If [Asian nations] can [stay] together, much better," Col. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesman, said in a statement released Sunday.*

*Padilla added that China will likely listen if more countries will speak out against its dredging activities in a number of reefs that are also being claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Japan.*

*Padilla said other countries are hesitant to speak out against China because they are protecting their interests, particularly on the economic front.*

*He, however, opined that China will not slap economic sanctions on these countries because Beijing is also dependent on trade.*

*"... Asean-China relations have always been more than just the South China Sea," Benjamin Ho, a maritime security researcher, said.*

*Asean-China relations are largely very stable at the moment.*

*Such ties were further strengthened with the Asean support for the recent Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank initiative by the world's second largest economy.*

# Senior Leader's Arrest is Latest Setback for Communist Insurgency in the Philippines

6 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** In a serious blow to the communist insurgency in the Philippines, the topmost leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines – New People's Army – National Democratic Front in Panay Island was arrested in a joint police and military operation. According to the accompanying article, Maria Concepcion Araneta-Bocala was arrested in Iloilo City, Iloilo Province, in the central western part of the archipelago. Since June, following the capture of Adelberto Silva, the highest-ranking New People's Army leader, and death of guerilla leader Leonardo Pitao, this arrest is the latest victory for Filipino authorities against the Communist Party of the Philippines – New People's Army – National Democratic Front, an insurgency that dates back to 1969.

According to Major Ray Tiongson, spokesperson for the Philippine Army's 3rd Infantry Division, Araneta-Bocala joined the movement in the 1970s, and was considered one of the pioneers of the First Quarter Storm, which went underground during the martial law period. She has been linked to several atrocities in the region.

As the excerpt points out, the arrest will be a serious blow to the hierarchy of the insurgent group. Police Regional Office Chief Superintendent Bernardo Diaz says, "There will be a vacuum in its leadership considering that Araneta-Bocala, as the head of the rebel movement in the region, directed the conduct of atrocities."

In addition to the above-mentioned setbacks for the rebel movement, Communist Party of the Philippines Chairman Benito Tiamzon and his wife Wilma, the party's Secretary-General, were arrested last year. **End OE Watch Commentary (Ortiz)**

**Source:** "Top CPP-NPA-NDF (Panay) leader falls to authorities," *The Freeman*, 2 August 2015, <http://www.philstar.com:8080/region/2015/08/02/1483703/top-cpp-npa-ndf-panay-leader-falls-authorities>

*The topmost leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines – New People's Army – National Democratic Front in Panay Island was arrested in a joint police and military operation yesterday morning.*

*Maria Concepcion "Concha" Araneta-Bocala, ... was arrested in a rented house at Juntado Subdivision in Barangay Calumpang of Molo district in this city. ...*

*According to Major Ray Tiongson, 3rd ID spokesperson, Araneta-Bocala joined the movement in the 1970s, and was considered one of the pioneers of the First Quarter Storm who went underground during the Martial Law Period. She has been linked to several atrocities in the region since, added Tiongson.*

*Meanwhile, Chief Superintendent Bernardo Diaz, Police Regional Office-6 director, said Araneta-Bocala's arrest showed that justice had been served, while being a serious blow against the hierarchy of the CPP-NPA-NDF.*

*"There will be a vacuum in its leadership considering that Araneta-Bocala, as the head of the rebel movement in the region, directed the conduct of atrocities," said Diaz.*



Iloilo City

Source: by Mike Gonzalez (TheCoffee) - English Wikipedia. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ph\\_locator\\_iloilo\\_iloilo.png#/media/File:Ph\\_locator\\_iloilo\\_iloilo.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ph_locator_iloilo_iloilo.png#/media/File:Ph_locator_iloilo_iloilo.png)

**Source:** "NPA senior leader falls in Iloilo," *The Manila Times*, 2 August 2015, <http://www.manilatimes.net/npa-senior-leader-falls-in-iloilo/205838/>

*A leading NPA commander, Leonardo Pitao, was killed in a mountainous hamlet near the major southern city of Davao in June.*

*Earlier that month, Adelberto Silva, described by the military as the "highest-ranking" CPP-NPA leader, was captured. Last year CPP chairman Benito Tiamzon and his wife Wilma Tiamzon, the party's secretary-general, were arrested.*

# Reality or Paranoia for Cambodia's Revolution?

10 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Echoing remarks by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Minister of Defense Tea Banh called on the military to be ready to suppress any attempt at a “color revolution,” telling Royal Cambodian Armed Forces soldiers that dissenters were preparing for a revolution at that very moment. According to the accompanying article, Banh warned that the political situation in Cambodia was rapidly changing, and without caution a revolution could break out at any time. He said that such movements build power at a grassroots level and are capable of toppling a government through non-violence.

Color revolution is a term that has been used to describe various movements that developed in the former Soviet Union and the Balkans during the early 2000s. Participants of color revolutions have mostly used nonviolent resistance against governments, including demonstrations, strikes, and interventions.

As indicated in the accompanying article, Banh’s comments bore a clear resemblance to those delivered by Prime Minister Sen one week earlier to a crowd of approximately 5,000 high-ranking military and police officials. In that speech Sen called on forces to be vigilant against color revolutions, adding, “armed forces must be loyal to the government”.

According to the article, Banh went on to remark about recent civil society protests and characterized their organizers as malcontents. “If they cannot get anything that benefits them, they claim this is not a democracy. If we cannot control democracy, it will become anarchy,” he said.

As the excerpt points out, political analyst Ou Virak, founder of the Future Forum think tank in Cambodia, said the recent speeches were a symptom of the ruling Cambodian People’s Party’s “paranoia.” Turning to repressive measures such as violent crackdowns only serves to bolster the conditions for populist uprisings, he added. “If their biggest fear is a color revolution, which is a people’s revolution, then the best thing for them would be to understand the people and take care of their needs.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Ortiz)**



Minister of Defense Tea Banh

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:General\\_Tea\\_Banh.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:General_Tea_Banh.jpg).

**Source:** “Defence Chief Vows to ‘Control’ Democracy,” *The Phnom Penh Post*, 29 July 2015, <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/defence-chief-vows-control-democracy>

*Echoing remarks by Prime Minister Hun Sen last week, Minister of Defence Tea Banh called on the military yesterday to be ready to suppress any attempt at a “colour revolution”, telling soldiers that agitators were fomenting such a revolution at that very moment.*

*Speaking at a ceremony marking the completion of training at a Kampong Speu military base, Banh warned cadets that the political situation in the country was rapidly changing, and that without caution, a revolution could break out at any time.*

*Banh went on to remark ... and characterised organisers as malcontents.*

*“If they cannot get anything that benefits them, they claim this is not a democracy. If we cannot control democracy, it will become anarchy,” he said.*

*Banh’s comments bore a clear resemblance to those delivered by the prime minister last Thursday to a crowd of some 5,000 high-ranking military and police officials.*

*In that speech, Hun Sen ... called on forces to be vigilant against colour revolutions, adding that “armed forces must be loyal to the government”.*

*Political analyst Ou Virak yesterday said the recent speeches were emblematic of the ruling Cambodian People’s Party’s “paranoia”, ...*

*... turning to repressive measures such as violent crackdowns only serves to bolster the conditions for populist uprisings, Virak added.*

*“If their biggest fear is a colour revolution, which is a people’s revolution, then the best thing for them would be to understand the people and take care of their needs.”*

## Thai Government Helps Landowners Manage Challenges of Southern Insurgency

12 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Thailand has opened a bureau in its southern border provinces to assist landowners who have had to leave their land because of insecurity stemming from the regional insurgency. According to excerpts in the accompanying article, the new service, known as the Land, Assets and Livelihood Assistance Office, was established in early June. It works under the auspices of the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center, which oversees efforts aimed at restoring peace in the region. The center has ordered each province to set up a Land, Assets and Livelihood Assistance Office Operations Center in every district to assist landowners who abandon their land or to bring in third parties to cultivate it.

As indicated in the article, more than 6,000 people have been killed since 2004 in separatist-related violence gripping Thailand's predominantly Muslim Deep South. As a result of the violence, according to surveys, migration and land-use changes have occurred in the region. A key finding in the surveys was the high degree to which the unrest affected people's ability to continue pursuing their normal livelihoods.

As the excerpt points out, the concerns of villagers led to the opening of the Land, Assets and Livelihood Assistance Office Operations Center. Over the years many of these villagers contacted Southern Border Provinces Administration Center asking if it would rent or purchase their properties; however, the center has no mechanism or legal right to conduct such transactions.

As the excerpt points out, the Land, Assets and Livelihood Assistance Office Operations Center intends to keep local families in the area. "This issue goes back three years, when the cabinet had a policy to provide assistance to those who were afraid to continue living in areas where they had landholdings, which they formerly depended upon for their livelihoods, and instead decided to move their families elsewhere," says Southern Border Provinces Administration Center Deputy Director Piya Kijthavorn. **End OE Watch Commentary (Ortiz)**

**Source:** "New Service Helps Landowners Affected by Thailand's Southern Insurgency," *BenarNews*, 3 August 2015, <http://www.benarnews.org/english/news/thai/yala-08032015144238.html>

*Thailand has opened a bureau in its southern border provinces to assist people who have had to leave their land because of insecurity stemming from a regional insurgency.*

*The new service, known as the Land, Assets and Livelihood Assistance Office (LALAO), was established in early June. It works under the auspices of the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center, or SBPAC, which oversees efforts aimed at restoring peace in the region.*

*"This issue goes back three years, when the cabinet had a policy to provide assistance to those who were afraid to continue living in areas where they had landholdings, which they formerly depended upon for their livelihoods, and instead decided to move their families elsewhere," SBPAC Deputy Director Piya Kijthavorn ....*

*More than 6,000 people have been killed since 2004 in separatist-related violence gripping Thailand's predominantly Muslim Deep South.*

*Surveys confirm that migration and land-use changes have occurred in the region since the violence flared up in early 2004.*

*A key finding, however, was the high degree to which the unrest affected people's ability to keep pursuing normal livelihoods.*

*Over the years, many of these villagers have contacted SBPAC asking if it would rent or purchase their properties. But SBPAC has no mechanism or legal right to conduct such transactions, SBPAC official Kitti Saengpongchawal explained.*

*Instead, the center has ordered each province to set up a LALAO Operations Center in every district to assist landowners who abandon their land, or to bring in third parties to cultivate it.*



Thai farmer herding water buffalo

Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/db/2005-9usi-thai.jpg>.

# China and Thailand See New Threats in Bangkok Bomb Inquiry

19 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** After two bombs struck Bangkok on 17 and 18 August, the search for suspects began (the first bomb killed 20 people, while second bomb detonated in water and left no casualties). According to an excerpted article from the *Bangkok Post*, there is a possibility that the network responsible for the bombings included Uighurs from China's Xinjiang Province.

Though there was little substantive evidence available to support this claim, the article's suspicion of Uighur involvement in the attacks suggests that Thailand and China perceive heightened security threats from the Uighur demographic. As a result, China has warned its citizens about potential terrorist attacks against them not only in Turkey, where most Uighur expatriates live, but also now in Thailand, where fewer Uighurs live. However, the Uighurs who do live in Thailand harbor anger at Thailand for its having repatriated several hundred undocumented Uighur migrants back to China in July 2015 and then China using diplomatic leverage to force the subsequent imprisonment of some of them.

The repatriated Uighurs included almost all men, while women and children were allowed to fly to Turkey. At the very least, a precedent was set as a result of Thailand's decision to send the men back: Uighur men in Thailand have little hope of reaching Turkey if arrested. Meanwhile, as a result of the diplomatic pressure on Thailand because of the repatriation, it has clamped down on undocumented Uighur migration to avoid more of these types of scenarios.

What the article does not mention is that the remaining undocumented Uighur population in the Bangkok metropolis may now sense despair. A network could have carried out these bombings knowing that their fate was likely arrest and repatriation to China. An attack with this motive would resemble an attack in 2014, when a group of ten Uighurs were rejected from entering Laos at the China-Laos border. They returned to the nearby city of Kunming, China, to carry out a mass stabbing at a train station that killed more than 20 people.

The article does not mention whether China and Thailand plan to take any immediate actions to coordinate security or intelligence-gathering together. Moreover, this would be premature until the suspects in the attack are apprehended. Nonetheless, China and Thailand will likely both renew efforts to stabilize the Thailand-Malaysia border area, where most Uighur migrants have been hiding, some receiving aid from southern Thailand's Malay Muslim insurgents. In addition, Thailand will also likely patrol more closely the narrow sois (streets) of urban Bangkok, where the Uighur network, as well as other criminal networks, may operate. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

*“Sources say the probe is focusing on a revenge motive by Uighur militants, after the Thai government deported Chinese Muslim migrants to Beijing in July.”*



The plight of Uighur undocumented migrant children at the Thailand-Malaysia border and the anger at the repatriation of some of their fathers to China may have been a motive behind two bombings in Bangkok.

Source: <http://www.voanews.com/content/thailand-draws-ire-over-deportation-of-more-than-100-uighurs-to-china/2854935.html>

**Source:** “City Police Probe Uighur Revenge Motive for Blast,” *Bangkok Post*, 19 August 2015.

## ***China and Thailand Turn Early Eyes to Uighurs in Bomb Inquiry***

*As police Tuesday evening stepped up their hunt for a man filmed at the shrine shortly before Monday's deadly blast, sources say the probe is focusing on a revenge motive by Uighur militants, after the Thai government deported Chinese Muslim migrants to Beijing in July. They may be doing it for a political motive or to undermine the economy or tourism or for other reasons. General Prayut declined to say whether the attack was perpetrated by Uighur militants as suggested by Chinese media and Thai police sources.*

*The bomb has already scared foreign tourists, with China, this country's biggest source of overseas arrivals, issuing a travel warning to its citizens. Police deployed more officers to the Chinese embassy in Bangkok after its request two weeks ago. Intelligence from the Special Branch also suggested there could be another attack on Chinese tourists. Meanwhile, police said they are hunting for a “Middle Eastern-looking man” caught on a closed circuit TV camera, whom they are “more than 50% certain” was the bomber. They are searching for the suspect in Nana sois 3, 5, 9 and 11, a neighbourhood popular with Uighur migrants.*

## China's Semi-Submersible Ship: A New Weapon?

24 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Recently, a South Sea Fleet unit christened the Donghaidao (868), China's first semi-submersible ship to be used by the People's Liberation Army Navy in its order of battle. China is hailing the Donghaidao as the Navy's "first new-concept mobile landing platform." The platform has been called the "all-new island assault vessel." Its ballast fills with water, causing the loading deck to submerge beneath the water's surface. This makes it ideal for the loading and unloading and transport of extremely large and heavy maritime facilities and/or vessels that cannot be easily broken down.

The five functions of the Donghaidao are to tow or carry heavy equipment and vessels, including various types of helicopters and armored vehicles; to enhance China's long-range attack capabilities (for example, it can carry several Type 726 hovercrafts, each of which can transport one main battle tank from sea to shore); to serve as a sea base, enhancing amphibious assault capabilities and serving as a transfer platform for personnel, vehicles, weapons, and equipment, making it easier to participate in non-war military actions, such as patrolling and law enforcement in the South China Sea; to serve as a transfer platform that enhances the military transport capabilities of civilian vessels; and to be used as an emergency repair platform, which would enhance maritime support capabilities.

This is not the first time China will have employed a semi-submersible ship. In the 1980s two Chinese shipping companies purchased two barges from overseas. Then, working jointly with the Netherlands, China helped to design a semi-submersible ship, two of which served the shipping and trade industry in 2002 and 2003 respectively. China then began to independently design and build semi-submersible ships.

The article compares Donghaidao to the USNS Montford Point, a massive U.S. mobile landing platform launched in November 2012. The article explains that the Donghaidao clearly has less tonnage than the Montford Point. Global presence and operations require longer distances and larger-scale delivery of troops and equipment; therefore a larger semi-submersible platform is required.

China seems to be making strides to increase the size and capabilities of its semi-submersible ships. Currently, the Donghaidao is 175.5 meters long, 32.4 meters wide, and has a displacement of over 20,000 tons. On 16 July, during the National Defense Science and Technology Industry Military-Civilian Merger Development Achievement Expo, the China State Shipbuilding Corporation showed a model of the Guanguhakou, a 50,000 ton-class semi-submersible ship with transport capabilities that surpass those of the Donghaidao. This means that China already possesses the advanced design and manufacturing capabilities necessary for the research and development of large-tonnage semi-submersible ships. The article ties the Donghaidao to future operations in the South China Sea, which could mean future increased power projection capability across and beyond the South China Sea. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

*“Due to the fact that the semi-submersible ship has given our country's Navy new long-range delivery capabilities, it also has been called the “all-new island assault vessel.”*”



Source: CCTV and USNI

**Source:** Zhang Lijun and Li Wei, “半潜船，保卫南海的新利器 (Semi-Submersible Ships -New Weapons for the Defense of the South China Sea), Military section of People.cn, 24 July 2015, <<http://military.people.com.cn/n/2015/0724/c1011-27354994.html>>.

### ***Semi-Submersible Ships – New Weapons for the Defense of the South China Sea***

*... The Donghaidao's one thousand square-meter area deck can carry several Type 726 hovercrafts, and each hovercraft can directly transport one main battle tank from sea to shore. The Donghaidao can also carry and transport Zubr-class hovercraft imported from Ukraine, thereby greatly extending this hovercraft's operational radius and realizing large-quantity, long-distance, rapid delivery of personnel, equipment, and materiel. Due to the fact that the semi-submersible ship has given our country's Navy new long-range delivery capabilities, it also has been called the “all-new island assault vessel.”*

*Someone has provided the following analysis: The Zubr-class hovercraft has heavy carrying capacity, high speeds, and powerful self-defense capabilities, but it has a relatively short range, making it only suitable for executing relatively close-range shore-to-shore amphibious operational tasks. Given its excessively large size, it would be difficult for any landing mother ship to carry it. As such, if the Zubr were to implement transport in such vast sea areas as those between Hainan Island and the Xisha Islands [Paracel Islands], it would need to rely on fuel support from replenishment vessels in order to make it back and forth. The combination of the Donghaidao semi-submersible ship and the Zubr-class hovercraft makes up for the Zubr's short-range deficiency, greatly expanding the Zubr's range of use; it will be able to cover all of the hot-point sea areas and islands and reefs around our country within its operational range. As a result, one will see huge magnitude improvements in the long-range attack capabilities of the Chinese military...*

## The Role of China's Blue Forces in Training the PLA

31 July 2015

*“We know that to build an up-to-standard Blue Force unit, it is important to possess informatized weaponry and equipment, possess strong fire strike capability, and resemble the operational opponent in form and in essence.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** Blue versus Red Forces are used by countries when conducting military exercises. In China the former represent Western militaries while the latter represent Chinese militaries. China has been shaping its Blue Forces since at least 1980, after Chinese delegations visiting foreign army bases around the world realized the importance of opposing force training (OPFOR). In his book, *The Three Faces of the Cyber Dragon* ([http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/ThreeFaces\\_2015.pdf](http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/ThreeFaces_2015.pdf)), Tim Thomas, Senior Analyst at the Foreign Military Studies Office, explains that at first there was resistance to the concept of a Blue Force. However, participants soon realized that Blue Forces played important roles as instructors, offering insight into foreign army tactics by which Red Forces could learn.

Some of the first media reports about China's Blue Forces did not come out until about 2004. Since that time media reports point to a rapid evolution, and today, each military region has its Blue Forces.

The following two articles illustrate the role of Blue Forces in recent Chinese training. The first article focuses on the PLA Air Force (PLAAF). It explains that over the past few years the PLAAF has strived to build realistic battlefields and enhance the intensity of training. Members of the Blue Forces are selected from among the very best in order to offer realistic opposition, thus elevating the capabilities of the Red Forces.

The second article stresses the importance of building an “up-to-standard Blue Force unit.” This entails using informatized weaponry and equipment, having strong fire strike capabilities, and being able to mimic the adversary “in form and in essence.” It goes on to explain that Blue Forces enable Red Forces to comprehend better what war will be like in the future by conducting realistic combat actions against an opposing force.

In the past, not only did Chinese military training maneuvers focus on mechanized warfare, but they also utilized Blue Forces simply as a tool, with little planning and study. This meant that the Blue Forces tended to be more like Red Forces. Blue Forces often lost in these exercises. Today, Blue Forces are carefully put together, integrate modern capabilities, and resemble “the operational opponent in form and in essence.” As a result, China's Blue Forces tend to win the vast majority of military exercises. This will likely elevate China's Red Forces capabilities. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

**Source:** Xu Yongling, “蓝天的检验 (Undergoing the Inspection of the Blue Skies),” *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, 31 July 2015, <[http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2015-07/31/nw.D110000zgqnb\\_20150731\\_2-09.htm](http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2015-07/31/nw.D110000zgqnb_20150731_2-09.htm)>.

### *Undergoing a Blue Skies Inspection*

*If it can be said that future war is the wind vane of military training, then the pointer on one end must be pointing to the future battlefield and future opponent, and the pointer at the other end must be connected to the cultivation of military talents.*

*The Air Force has also, on the other hand, strengthened Blue Force team construction, not only deliberately simulating the opponent on the external level of distinguishing behavior but more importantly also emulating the opponent in terms of operational concepts and organization and operational modes. The members of the Blue Force are all selected from among the very best, so the partial failure of the Red Force in confrontation or even their total failure has become a common occurrence, thereby thoroughly changing around the unfortunate phenomena of the past of staging things for the sake of the so-called exercise effect or even being biased when giving evaluations.*

*... Protecting the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and protecting and escorting the national strategy of the Chinese Dream are the missions that the PLA Air Force must uphold. To achieve this sacred mission, in addition to constantly enhancing the technological level of the Air Force's weapons and equipment, using training to practically increase the room for freedom of action and improve the capabilities for completing diverse tasks has become a serious issue facing the PLA Air Force.*

**Source:** Fang Yongzhi, “蓝军的职责就是告诉红军 未来战争到底什么样 (The Duty of the Blue Forces is to Tell the Red Forces What Kind of War to Fight in the Future),” *cyol.net* (Chinese Youth newspaper), 24 July 2015, <[http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2015-07/24/nw.D110000zgqnb\\_20150724\\_2-09.htm](http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2015-07/24/nw.D110000zgqnb_20150724_2-09.htm)>.

### *The Duty of the Blue Forces is to Tell the Red Forces What Kind of War to Fight in the Future*

*We know that to build an up-to-standard Blue Force unit, it is important to possess informatized weaponry and equipment, possess strong fire strike capability, and resemble the operational opponent in form and in essence. In addition, the purpose of using a Blue Force is to tell the Red Force units what kind of war to fight in the future through combat-realistic actions against an opposing force.*

## China Trains for Future Battlefields

25 July 2015

*“We did not expect that a tank company could be defeated by two helicopters, and then lose battlefield initiative. The outcome of this exercise strongly shocked the brigade.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** China has worked hard to construct future battlefield scenarios. Over the past two years the journal *China Military Science* (CMS) in particular has examined many issues associated with this theme. Whether the identification of these topics is the result of People’s Liberation Army (PLA) lessons learned from an examination of the contemporary battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan is difficult to ascertain. Topics in CMS offer a general PLA summation of developing issues for those studying the preparation of a future war battlefield. The analysis that CMS has provided offers a snapshot of how that battlefield is shaping up and includes four basic topics: general concepts of a modern battlefield, forces to employ there, various battlefield theories, and target identification.

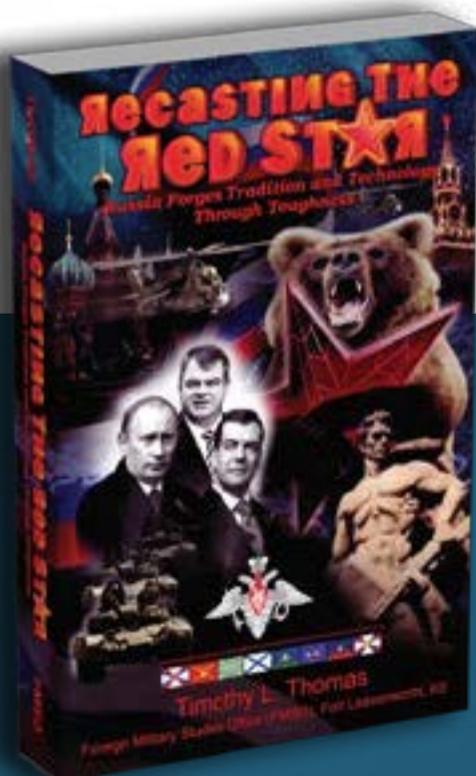
A recent *Jiefangjun Bao Online* article has added the additional thought that exercises in peacetime are adding new methods for confronting potential foes. The article under consideration here discusses how mistakes made during training needed to be transformed into key lessons learned. It was also apparent that commanders were not staying abreast of recent changes in warfare. The authors noted, “At present, the main threats to tank detachments have been changed to helicopters and long-range precision guided weapons, but our training contents have not been changed accordingly.” PLA instructors and commanders are now in the process of making such changes by examining the results of training and developing new training techniques and methods for use on potential future PLA battlefields. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

**Source:** Li Jiansong and Li Yuefei, “Armored Brigade of the Nanjing Military Region Adjusts Training Contents According to Future Battlefields, Makes up for Shortfalls before Actual Operations with New Realistic Training Tasks,” *Jiefangjun Bao Online*, 25 July 2015.

*When they exploited the victory and staged attacks on “remnant enemies,” two “enemy” helicopter gunships suddenly appeared and fired a number of anti-tank missiles. Facing the abrupt counterattacks from the opponent, the Fourth Company was knocked off stride and forced into a messy condition. Multiple tanks were hit, releasing red smoke. The battle damage rate of the tanks reached 80 percent.*

*To solve the difficult issue of air defense for tank detachments, they selected backbone specialists to pool collective wisdom for tackling the crucial issues, invited experts from military academies to give guidance on the spot, explored a series of combat and training methods, such as “discharging foil to disrupt missiles,” “discharging smoke for concealment and dispersion.” They also added this to the training plan as routine training courses. In a test based on engagements between opposing forces last month, the Fourth Tank Company once again encountered “enemy” helicopters. It not only preserved 70 percent of its combat power, but also expelled the “enemy” helicopters by means of concentrated fire.*

*By browsing the brigade’s annual training plan, the authors found that new training courses account for nearly 20 percent.*



**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.**

# Advancing Chinese Technology Brings Advancements as Well as Vulnerabilities

14 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** China is known as the “world’s factory” because some years ago it became the world’s largest manufacturer. It is particularly well known for producing electronic equipment, accounting for 90% of the world’s total laptop production and more than 70% of the world’s mobile phones. This production supplies both the export market and China’s enormous and still growing domestic market. Yet, the key components of all of these devices are not produced in China, but rather imported from more developed countries. There is not a single domestic semiconductor supplier among the top 15 suppliers within China.

The first article provides a few key facts on China’s reliance on imported semi-conductors. China’s dependence on imported oil is well known – China imports nearly 60% of the oil it consumes. Though China’s role as the world’s largest exporter is well known, the fact that by value it imports more semiconductors than oil highlights its degree of two-way trade dependence. From a macroeconomic perspective, this exposes China to changes in the world economy and the actions of other globally important economies, their central banks and governments. From a micro perspective, it often means that Chinese companies are dependent on the pricing and technology decisions made by others. Chinese companies are limited in their ability to acquire, copy, and imitate technologies and products created and sourced by others. At an early stage of development such as China was in during the 1990s and 2000s, this is usually not a major disadvantage, but as China narrows the relative technology gap with more advanced economies, so grows the importance of controlling the original technology. The Chinese government appreciates its economy’s need to move up the value chain and is investing billions of dollars over the next ten years in advancing home-grown semiconductor capabilities.

The second article describes how Chinese information technology companies are taking an aggressive stand in their pursuit of not only creating new technology, but also doing so in such a dominant fashion as to have the Chinese version of the new technology adopted as the world standard. By setting the global standard, Chinese companies would gain a greater share of the value added within their respective technology areas. They would also, in effect, turn the tables on foreign companies, making the foreigners dependent on the actions of Chinese companies and their government.

However, all is not so linear for China in its attempt to reform its economy and get closer to the technology frontier. The third article speaks to one of the second-order domestic consequences of China’s pursuit of higher technology, namely machines replacing workers. Both Chinese wages and competition from the likes of Vietnam and even Ethiopia are rising. For continued economic growth Chinese companies must increase their value-added and reduce costs. To achieve that they must employ higher levels of manufacturing automation. In a country where the annual per capita income is less than \$9,000 (in 2014 real US dollars) and human capital remains modest, China could be facing the early stages of de-industrialization prior to it fully industrializing, like South Korea or Taiwan. No wonder the Chinese government is very sensitive to the need to continue the “old style” infrastructure-intensive growth alongside reforms intended to reduce the economy’s addiction to this debt-fueled but job-creating growth. The key for interested observers is to understand in which industries China may set the global standard and then to forecast the second-order consequences for the Chinese economy, as well as for other globally important countries. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zandoli)**

**Source:** “The Chips Are Up,” *Chinanews.com*, 5 August 2015. [http://en.people.cn/n/2015/0805/c202936-8931851.html?utm\\_source=SITC+Bulletin%2C+Week+of+August+6](http://en.people.cn/n/2015/0805/c202936-8931851.html?utm_source=SITC+Bulletin%2C+Week+of+August+6).

## ***China Spends More on Chip Imports Than Oil***

*In 2014, China spent more on importing chips than importing oil, according to a report of*

*Xinhua News Agency, investing more than \$231 billion. Helping domestic manufacturers gain the technology to build smartphones is essential to maintaining the country’s overall economic development and global competitiveness.*



Source: People’s Daily Online

**Source:** “China Strives to Take Lead in 5G Technology” *People’s Daily Online*, 30 July 2015. [http://en.people.cn/n/2015/0730/c98649-8928703.html?utm\\_source=SITC+Bulletin%2C+Week+of+August+6](http://en.people.cn/n/2015/0730/c98649-8928703.html?utm_source=SITC+Bulletin%2C+Week+of+August+6).

## ***China Seeks to Seek Global Mobile Communications Standards***

*Some experts pointed out that the rise of China’s mobile communication technology will change the situation of world communication industry. The Chinese version 5G standard is hopefully the world standard in the 5G era.*

**Source:** “First Unmanned Factory Takes Shape in Dongguan City,” *People’s Daily Online*, 15 July 2015. <http://en.people.cn/n/2015/0715/c90000-8920747.html>.

## ***A Robot Arm Can Replace 6 to 8 Workers***

*At the workshop of Changying Precision Technology Company in Dongguan, known as the “world factory”, which manufactures cell phone modules, 60 robot arms at 10 production lines are polishing the modules day and night. Each line has an automatic belt and three workers who are just responsible for checking lines and monitoring. A few months ago, it required 650 workers to finish this process. A robot arm can replace six to eight workers, now there are 60 workers and the number will be reduced to 20 in the future, according to Luo Weiqiang, general manager of the company.*

## Serbia Moves Toward EU While Drilling with Russia

19 August 2015

*“The Serbian government will now face a challenge in maintaining good relations both with the Russia and the West.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** While Serbia applied for and has continued seeking entrance into the European Union since 2009, it has also continued to develop its relations with Russia. As mentioned in the accompanying excerpt, Serbia maintains its neutrality, planning drills with both the Russian Army and NATO member countries. Serbia is a member of NATO’s Partners for Peace program, which is one of the highest levels of cooperation a country may reach as a non-member state.

This relationship dynamic has become especially strained with the Ukraine crisis as Serbia refuses to impose sanctions on Russia, while many call for Serbia to align its foreign policy more closely with the EU. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)**

**Source:** Jovanovic, Igor. “Serbia Military Drill with Russia Annoys EU.” *Balkan Insight*. 19 August 2015. <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/eu-opposes-to-serbia-s-military-drills-with-russia-08-18-2015-1>>

*According to Serbian media reports, Russian, Belarus and Serbian military units will organize a joint military exercise in September named “Slavic brotherhood” on Russian territory. ...*

*The Serbian army has also planned several military drills with NATO member armies this year.*

*Aleksandar Radic, a military expert in Belgrade, said the Serbian government will now face a challenge in maintaining good relations both with the Russia and the West at a time when their relations remain shaken due to the conflict in Ukraine...*

*The Serbian government has stressed on numerous occasions that EU integration is its priority but that it also wishes to maintain warm relations with Russia, Serbia’s traditional ally.*

*Serbia proclaimed its military neutrality in December 2007 and the current government under Aleksandar Vucic has announced no plans to change the policy.*

## Montenegro and Bosnia Sign Historic Border Agreement

17 August 2015

*“Bosnia and Herzegovina will be the first ex-Yugoslav republics to sign a border demarcation agreement.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina are the first two former-Yugoslav countries to officially resolve their shared border. Bosnia and Herzegovina received its independence in 1992, and Montenegro received its independence from Serbia in 2006. The two countries have maintained a relatively stable relationship since the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

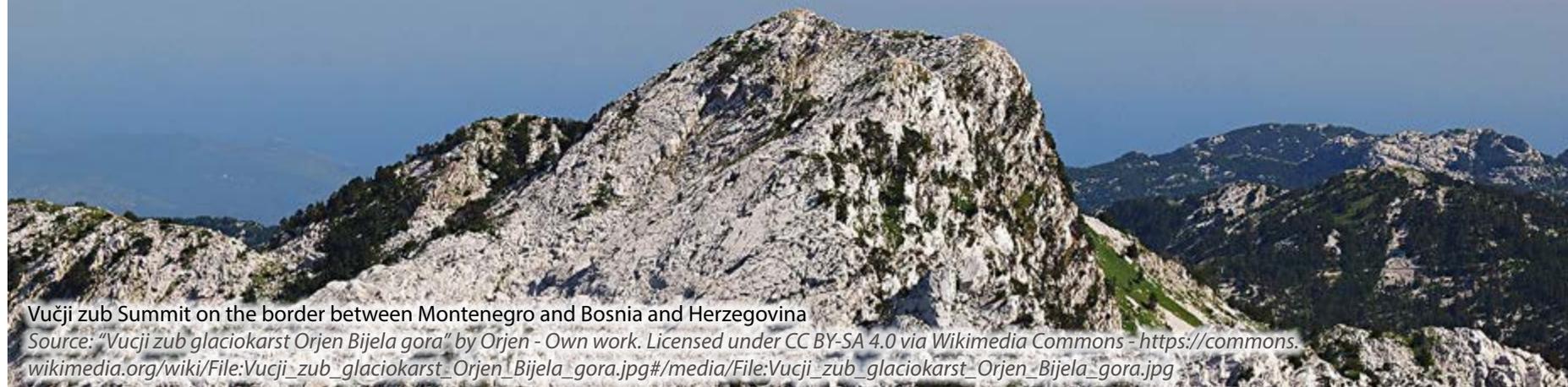
Negotiations on the border began in 2008, and technical agreements demarcated the border in May 2014. However, as indicated in the accompanying excerpt, the area of Sutorina is still contentious. Though both countries feel historic ownership of the area, the governments have legally found resolution in order to move forward to set a legally agreed border. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)**

**Source:** Tomovic, Dusica. “Montenegro, Bosnia to Sign Border Agreement.” *Balkan Insight*. 17 August 2015. <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/montenegro-bosnia-to-sign-border-agreement-08-17-2015>>

*Montenegrin President Filip Vujanovic on Sunday said Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina will be the first ex-Yugoslav republics to sign a border demarcation agreement.*

*Some Bosnian officials and intellectuals maintain that [the Sutorina] area was “illegally” grabbed by Montenegro in 1945 - and should have been returned to Bosnia since the subsequent border changes were never ratified.*

*However, relations between the two neighbours started returning to normal after Bosnia’s parliament rejected a resolution claiming a slice of land around the village.*



Vučji zub Summit on the border between Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Source: “Vucji zub glaciokarst Orjen Bijela gora” by Orjen - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vucji\\_zub\\_glaciokarst\\_Orjen\\_Bijela\\_gora.jpg#/media/File:Vucji\\_zub\\_glaciokarst\\_Orjen\\_Bijela\\_gora.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vucji_zub_glaciokarst_Orjen_Bijela_gora.jpg#/media/File:Vucji_zub_glaciokarst_Orjen_Bijela_gora.jpg)

# The Islamic State in Kyrgyzstan?

17 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Thus far, the threat in the post-Soviet Central Asian states posed by supporters of the Islamic State (IS) has not amounted to any physical violence (e.g., kidnappings, gunfights, bombings, etc.). As the accompanying article covering the 16 July raid in Bishkek suggests, however, that dynamic could be changing. The finer details and context behind the raid quickly became the topic of discussion for both officials and the Russian analytic community.

According to the official account, the IS cell was headed by a Kazakh citizen, but the group itself was composed of another Kazakh and some Kyrgyz men. The Kyrgyz official account stresses that this cell aimed to inflict

a devastating terror attack not only on the populated Ala-Too square in Bishkek, but also on the nearby Russian military air base at Kant. The impression that the official account leaves is that Islamists in Central Asia are organizing themselves into clandestine cells and posing a clear threat to civilians, as well as Kyrgyz and Russian forces in the region.

Director of the Central Asia Department at Russia's Academy of Sciences CIS Institute Andrey Grozin believes that the official account of the raid was designed in order to appeal to security support from regional partners (i.e., Collective Security Treaty Organization or Shanghai Cooperation Organization). He bases his observation in the context of Kyrgyzstan's recent distancing from the United States. While he does not entirely dismiss the likelihood of an Islamist threat to stability in Kyrgyzstan, his analysis differs from other Russian geopolitical experts in that he assesses the situation more skeptically. Grozin doubts the severity of an IS threat in Kyrgyzstan and instead argues that the Kyrgyz government is using alarmist coverage as a signal for further support from Moscow or Beijing. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rose)**

*“Kyrgyzstan can count on the fact that with exaggerations it will attract more attention and more resources.”*



Kyrgyz police and security forces surround the home of suspected Islamic State cell in Bishkek  
Source: <http://news.tj/ru/news/v-bishkeke-likvidirovana-gruppa-terroristov-khronologiya>

**Source:** “Эксперт: не стоит преувеличивать возможности ИГ в Средней Азии” (Expert: The IS threat in Central Asia should not be exaggerated), *Regnum*, 23 July 2015.  
<http://regnum.ru/news/polit/1945268.html>

## **Expert: The IS threat in Central Asia should not be exaggerated**

*Grozin poses the question: “Do we trust the Kyrgyz special forces’ account that they were linked to IS or not?”*

*Grozin argues that the Kyrgyz needed to demonstrate to neighbors that they were capable of suppressing a confirmed Islamist threat to the region. When asked by Regnum whether IS was recruiting from multiple ethnic groups in Central Asia, Grozin said that this was nothing new and “fits the borderless ideology of IS.”*

*According to Grozin, “I personally doubt that these ten homegrown terrorists would have been able to take the base. . . what appears as a storm of a military objective demands verification and validation with documents in hand.”*

*Grozin summarizes Kyrgyzstan’s position with the following: “Kyrgyzstan can count on the fact that with exaggerations it will attract more attention and more resources. Kyrgyzstan is looking to use its geopolitical position to compensate for its small size and lack of resources. . . Now there are two partners from whom Kyrgyzstan can get resources and survive: Moscow and Beijing.”*

## Gauging the Threat of the Islamic State to Kyrgyzstan

26 July 2015

*“The ‘Islamic State’, a designated terrorist organization in Kyrgyzstan, has released a propaganda video titled ‘A message to the people of Kyrgyzstan.’ This is the first instance that the IS addressed an audience in Kyrgyzstan.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** The two raids carried out by the Alpha (special forces) unit of the National Security Committee of Kyrgyzstan against suspected members of the Islamic State (IS) in Bishkek on 16 July surprised a number of people, as most violent incidents in the country are generally not related to religious extremist groups. The accompanying articles report on two other developments for Kyrgyzstan related to the IS: a video published on You Tube from a Kyrgyz man involved with the IS urging people from Kyrgyzstan to join the group, and a social media page of an unknown individual who posted pictures of the IS flag drawn up on a notecard-sized piece of paper in front of various buildings in Bishkek. Both of these developments took place after the raids, and there are a couple of things to consider about the IS and any possible connection to Kyrgyzstan.

The video message from the Kyrgyz man involved with the IS mentioned nothing about the 16 July raids, nor was there any other report that connected the suspected cell in Bishkek to the group. The limited information about the men suspected of being an IS cell in Kyrgyzstan was that they had criminal records and that one of them, a citizen of Kazakhstan, had escaped from a Bishkek prison prior to the raids. This is in addition to a former member of the Kyrgyz parliament being arrested on 20 July in connection with funding and supplying weapons to the alleged IS cell. This is similar to a group in Kazakhstan that was eliminated a few years ago that may have been inspired by an extremist religious ideology, but was focused on criminal activity, not terrorism. The man delivering the message in the video was confirmed and identified as Ulan Subankulov, a former resident of the Jalal-Abad Oblast. Perhaps most importantly, he only urges people in Kyrgyzstan to leave the country and join the IS; there is no mention of him calling for any acts of terrorism in Kyrgyzstan itself.

As for the individual who posted pictures of the IS flag in parts of Bishkek, he has since deleted the online profile, though screen captures of the page showed the photos with no message. The video message and pictures of the IS flag might be alarming, considering that they appeared not long after the raid in Bishkek; however, the two articles show that the threat of the IS to Kyrgyzstan is largely through influence, without a direct connection. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

**Source:** Bayaz, Malika. “ИГИЛ впервые опубликовал «послание народу Киргизии» (ISIL published the first “message to the people of Kyrgyzstan”), *Kloop*, 26 July 2015.  
<http://kloop.kg/blog/2015/07/26/srochno-igil-vpervye-opublikoval-poslanie-narodu-kirgizii/>

### ***ISIL published the first “message to the people of Kyrgyzstan”***

*The “Islamic State”, a designated terrorist organization in Kyrgyzstan, has released a propaganda video titled “A message to the people of Kyrgyzstan.” This is the first instance that the IS addressed an audience in Kyrgyzstan. The video appeared on July 25 on You Tube...an unknown man speaking in Kyrgyz, calls for Kyrgyz people to “move to the Islamic State and away from the land of infidels” and the video included Russian subtitles...*

*...The message from ISIL came nine days after a series of special operations in the north of Kyrgyzstan in which eight people, who according to the security services were members of the Islamic State, were killed. A representative of the National Security Committee said that the ISIL militants prepared attacks in Kyrgyzstan: the first at the large holiday prayers on July 17 and the second at the Russian airbase at Kant...*

**Source:** Uraliyev, Marat. “ГКНБ устанавливает личность сфотографировавшего флаг ИГИЛ на фоне здания ЖК” (The GKNB is determining the individual who photographed the ISIL flag in front of the Zhorgoku Kenesh building), *Evening Bishkek*, 5 August 2015.  
[http://www.vb.kg/doc/322130\\_gknb\\_ystanavlivaet\\_lichnost\\_sfotografirovavshego\\_flag\\_igil\\_na\\_fone\\_zdaniia\\_jk.html](http://www.vb.kg/doc/322130_gknb_ystanavlivaet_lichnost_sfotografirovavshego_flag_igil_na_fone_zdaniia_jk.html)

*Security services are determining the identity of the person who photographed the flag of the terrorist group “Islamic State” in front of government buildings in Bishkek...*

*...photographs of the ISIL flag in front of the Zhorgoku Kenesh (parliament building), on the “Ala-Too” square, and the Islamic University were published online on August 4...The pictures were accompanied with the caption “Soldiers of the Caliphate, we are waiting for you in Kyrgyzstan.”...that user’s (social media) page is now deleted.*

## Kazakhstan's Interest in a Peacekeeping Force

21 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Most of the attention that Kazakhstan's peacekeeping battalion (KAZBAT) receives in the media is often about the unit's annual joint peacekeeping exercise, "Steppe Eagle," or the Kazakh government's interest in deploying the battalion on a UN peacekeeping mission. The accompanying articles discuss some additional aspects of KAZBAT (which is working to transition to a brigade or KAZBRIG), particularly the unit's deployment to Iraq from 2003-2008, how members of the unit are currently deployed for the UN, and how the development of the unit fits into Kazakhstan's security cooperation and strategic goals.

The history of KAZBAT's deployment to Iraq is often overlooked outside of Kazakhstan, but, as both articles show, its work on ordnance disposal and water purification has had an impact on the unit. The first article also notes how there are currently members of KAZBAT deployed as military observers (experts on mission, according to the UN) in Africa. The government of Kazakhstan had announced plans in late 2013 to deploy as many as 20 military observers divided into four teams, though, according to UN reports, there are five military experts on mission with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahar (MINURSO) and two with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) as of June 2015. Regardless of how many KAZBAT soldiers are currently deployed, the unit's deployment in Iraq remains its largest thus far, and both articles describe it as a valuable experience.

In addition to highlighting KAZBAT's experience, the second article discusses the strengthening and modernization of Kazakhstan's Armed Forces and how the country has been partnering with the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and NATO for some of this development. The second article also notes how Kazakhstan looks to NATO,

*(continued)*

**Source:** Kusanova, Zhanar. "Казбатовцы обезвредили 4 миллиона мин и заработали по 15 000 долларов" (Kazbat soldiers defused 4 million mines and earned 15,000 dollars each), *Inform Bureau*, 21 July 2015. <http://informburo.kz/stati/missiya-8742.html>

***Kazbat soldiers defused 4 million mines and earned 15,000 dollars***

*15 years ago the first and only peacekeeping unit in Central Asia today came into being in the Kazakh army: Kazbat – the Kazakhstan peacekeeping battalion...they have taken part in peacekeeping operations of international coalition forces in Iraq. Today they perform as military observers in several countries of Africa...We would like to remember the Kazbat mission in Iraq...it was in this hotspot that our contingent bore its first loss: January 9, 2005, Captain Kayrat Kudabayev was killed unloading ammunition and four soldiers of Kazbat were wounded.*

*Informburo.kz journalists recently met with Kazbat sergeants who were in Iraq in 2005 and 2008...Before deploying to Iraq the Kazbat sergeants went to Kapchagay for psychological testing, an engineering-sapper course, and language training...In Iraq they served for six months... "...the Ministry of Defense tripled our salary. The result was that each of us earned around \$15,000 for the Iraq deployment..."*

*...engineer-sappers of the Kazbat detachment were responsible for the search, discovery and eliminating munitions, purifying water, as well as training local demolition teams... "We learned about new explosive devices, particularly homemade. In Kapchagay we had courses on Russian and even Soviet demolitions. And in Iraq we had to deal with mostly foreign components... Militants hid them under any size objects..."*

*...During a 6 year deployment in Iraq Kazbat soldiers destroyed more than 4 million explosive devices...200 soldiers of Kazbat were awarded with "Aibyn" for valor...*

**Source:** Kusanova, Zhanar. "Военная доктрина Казахстана: может, надо вроде НАТО (2-я часть) (The military doctrine of Kazakhstan: maybe, NATO is necessary (part 2))," *Inform Bureau*, 25 June 2015. <http://informburo.kz/stati/voennaya-doktrina-2-6111.html>

*...On May 27, 2015, the President – who is the head of armed forces – was briefed by the Minister of Defense and Chief of the General Staff of the steps being taken to strengthen the combat capability and further modernization of Kazakhstan's Army...questions are raised: ... What strategic allies can we count on in the exacerbation of a situation?...*

*...The Army of Kazakhstan, 73,000 strong, has a budget of \$2.4 billion...70 percent of the army is made up of contractors. There is experience in carrying out peacekeeping operations in conflict zones (in the mid-90s a Kazakh contingent guarded the Tajik-Afghan border, in the mid-2000s the international obligation in Iraq was carried out)...in the new Russian military doctrine it is clearly written who the Kremlin is friends with and who it is against...*

*...Not long ago he (Nikolai Bordyuzha, secretary general of the Collective Security Treaty Organization) stated the EU and NATO initiatives were unconstructive and hostile...if you look at the military doctrine of Kazakhstan, it is clearly stated that NATO is a partner of our country, especially in the area of peacekeeping operations...*

*...In April, in the Almaty region, the 14th annual NATO peacekeeping exercise "Steppe Eagle" took place with the participation of 500 Kazakh, British and American soldiers. The active phase took place in mid-June...Several years ago Kazakhstan signed a series of international agreements and treaties. These are the "Individual Partnership Action Plan" with NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) "Agreement on the Collective Rapid Reaction Force" and "Agreement on Collective Peacekeeping Forces"...*

*...First Deputy Commander, Chief of Staff of the Airmobile Forces of Kazakhstan, Colonel Talgat Ismailov: "...What was given to us over a 7 year period for the engineering sapper unit of Kazbat in Iraq? The answer: a wealth of experience. We learned a lot over 10 rotations...Our commanders learned to cohesively work with a multinational force in a combat situation..."... Not long after the first phase of "Steppe Eagle" took place in April, our paratroopers started the exercise of CSTO units of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force...Airmobile forces of Kazakhstan deployed to the airfield of the Tajik city of Kurganteppa...*

## Continued: Kazakhstan's Interest in a Peacekeeping Force

not the CSTO, for peacekeeping operations. This is important to consider, since Kazakh forces were involved in the Russian-led peacekeeping operation in Tajikistan during the Civil War (1992-97) and the CSTO started conducting annual peacekeeping exercises in 2012, with the next exercise set for the fall of 2015 in Armenia. This article goes on to mention how not long after Steppe Eagle took place in April, Kazakh units took part in a CSTO exercise in Tajikistan that tested the capabilities of the organization's reaction force. Kazakh forces have participated in more CSTO exercises than with any other organization over the last several years. Ultimately, the articles show that while Kazakhstan continues to be closely involved with the CSTO, the country looks to NATO for the development of a peacekeeping force. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

*“...What was given to us over a 7 year period for the engineering sapper unit of Kazbat in Iraq? The answer: a wealth of experience.”*

## The Public Relations Value of Counterterrorism Exercises in Kazakhstan

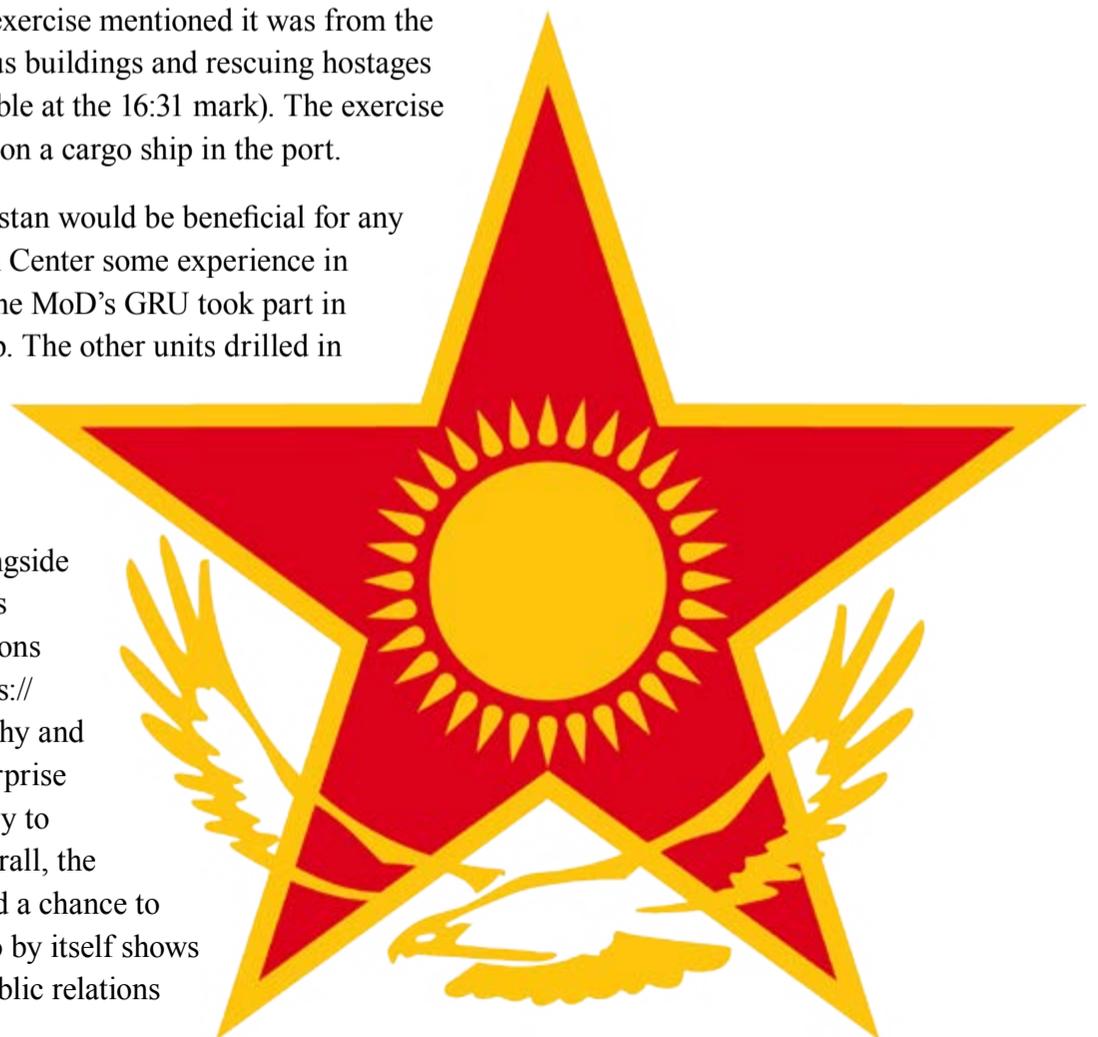
13 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** In late May of this year multiple ministries of Kazakhstan took part in an exercise in the port city of Aktau (Mangystau Oblast) on the Caspian Sea. The accompanying news brief includes a link to a video of the exercise posted on You Tube by a production company called Expedition+362. The documentary video, commissioned by the National Security Committee (KNB), is just under 20 minutes and includes interviews with the head of the KNB of the Mangystau Oblast, a few other government officials, as well as highlights of the exercise.

**Source:** “«Ақтау-Антитеррор-2015». Как это было («Ақтау-Антитеррор-2015». How it took place),” *Lada*, 13 July 2015. [http://www.lada.kz/aktau\\_news/society/29714-aktau-antiterror-2015-kak-eto-bylo.html](http://www.lada.kz/aktau_news/society/29714-aktau-antiterror-2015-kak-eto-bylo.html)

The narrator of the video mentions how the exercise was conducted through the Antiterrorism Center of Kazakhstan and that the KNB appears to have taken the lead in coordinating it. The narrator and government officials interviewed in the video make mostly general statements about the need to coordinate work on counterterrorism and the capabilities of the country's various special forces units to carry out counterterrorism operations. The scenario of the exercise consisted of the special forces units of Arystan (from the KNB), Sunkar and Berkut (Interior Ministry), and a detachment from the Ministry of Defense (though the unit is not identified in the video, another report on the exercise mentioned it was from the Main Intelligence Directorate or GRU) assaulting various buildings and rescuing hostages (including a crew of Border Guards on a patrol boat visible at the 16:31 mark). The exercise also included a group of firefighters responding to a fire on a cargo ship in the port.

The location of the exercise in a major port of Kazakhstan would be beneficial for any of these units, in addition to providing the Antiterrorism Center some experience in coordinating efforts from multiple ministries, but only the MoD's GRU took part in a scenario at the port during the hostage rescue on a ship. The other units drilled in buildings and at a training center of a mock village that could have taken place in a number of different locations across the country. One of the most noticeable things about the video is how some of the footage of the exercise came from camera operators working right alongside the various special forces units during the mock raids, as well as from cameras mounted on the helmets and weapons of soldiers. The production company's website (see: <https://plus362.kz/>) shows a professional portfolio of photography and video services in the Mangystau Oblast, so it is not a surprise that they would be hired to document the exercise and try to increase awareness of the country's security forces. Overall, the exercise may have provided all of the ministries involved a chance to coordinate efforts, but the professionally produced video by itself shows that the exercise may have had just as significant of a public relations value. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



## The Multipurpose 'Supercam 300M' UAV

23 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Russian Federation is experimenting with several different UAVs for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance duties. The Russian Ground Forces have been particularly interested in the use of UAVs for artillery spotting. In 2014 Russia added almost 200 UAVs to its inventory and activated 14 UAV companies, with plans that each of Russia's motorized rifle brigades will gain a dedicated UAV company in the next few years. The Russian Ministry of Defense has also announced plans to field its first UAV regiment and set up an inter-ministerial UAV training center.

The accompanying articles discuss Russia's latest UAV endeavor, the "Supercam 330M," which is entering into serial production. Apparently the Supercam 330M is a modified version of a UAV that was originally intended for civil purposes. The Supercam 330M can carry multiple payloads and boasts a laser target designator, a notable first, as other Russian UAVs of this size and purpose (such as the Orlan-10) have no such capability. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** "In Izhevsk, The Serial Production of Reconnaissance UAV Commences," *Interfax*, 23 July 2015, <<http://www.interfax.ru/russia/455650>>, accessed 15 August 2015.

### ***In Izhevsk, The Serial Production of Reconnaissance UAV Commences***

*Russian unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) manufacturer Bepilotniye Sistemy is starting production of its 15kg-class Supercam 300M UAV, its director Aleksandr Ushomirskiy has said, privately-owned Russian military news agency Interfax-AVN reported on 23 July.*

*"The first systems with the new Supercam 300M are going into production," Ushomirskiy said.*

*The system is in demand and will go into mass production in 2016, but "the first few may be delivered in 2015", he said.*

*The Izhevsk-based company expects demand for several tens of the system a year, he said.*

*Supercam 300M is a flying-wing configuration, multi-role tactical UAV capable of being equipped with various payloads depending on requirements, including video, thermal imagers or cameras, the report said. The UAV is launched by a pneumatic catapult, the report said.*

**Source:** "The 'Unmanned Systems' Conglomerate Presented the latest UAV Supercam 300M," *Voyenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer Online*, 26 June 2015, <[http://vpk.name/news/134839\\_gruppa\\_kompanii\\_bepilotnyie\\_sistemyi\\_predstavila\\_noveishii\\_bpla\\_supercam\\_s300m\\_burevestnik.html?last](http://vpk.name/news/134839_gruppa_kompanii_bepilotnyie_sistemyi_predstavila_noveishii_bpla_supercam_s300m_burevestnik.html?last)>, accessed 10 August 2015.

### ***The 'Unmanned Systems' Conglomerate Presented the latest UAV Supercam 300M***

*In early June, the 'Unmanned Systems' Conglomerate completed internal testing of the new Supercam 300M UAV. Development of the UAV began in the summer of 2013. The engineers had a difficult task, increasing the number of simultaneously mounted payloads on the UAV...*

*As a result of the research and development, a multipurpose UAV was fielded with a flight of 3.5 hours capable of carrying three payloads. One payload is mounted on a three-axis gyro-stabilized, and the other two on fixed platforms. The Supercam 300M may carry any combination of the following sensors: HD/PAL Camcorder, thermal imager, 720x576 video camera, ultra-high sensitivity video camera, and 36 megapixel camera...*

*The Supercam 300M has the ability to transfer photo and video in real time. The UAV also has a laser target designator...*



Source: <http://www.unmanned.ru/>

### **UAV Supercam 300M**

- Flight time: 3.5 hours
- Airspeed: 65/120 km/h
- Radio Link Range: up to 90 km
- Maximum Length of Route: 220 km
- Maximum Range of Video Transmission: 50 km
- Takeoff weight: 9.5-10.5 kg
- Wingspan: 3 m
- Operating Altitude: 50-5000 m
- Service Ceiling: 6000 m
- Set-Up/Deployment: 15 minutes
- Maximum Wind Speed: 15 m/second
- Temperature Range: -40° C to + 40° C
- Launch Method: pneumatic catapult
- Landing: parachute
- Launch and Landing Area: 100 x 100 m
- Flight Modes: automatic or semiautomatic

# New Combined Arms, Tank, Air Force & Air Defense Armies to be Formed

29 July 2015

## OE Watch Commentary:

The Russian Federation plans to create three new Army-level commands before the end of the year, according to the accompanying articles. Since the “New Look” reforms that began in 2008, the Russian Federation has fielded two combined-arms armies in each of its four operational strategic commands (OSK). The Russian Federation is now creating an additional combined-arms army (20th Guards Combined-Arms Army) and tank army (1st Guards Tank Army) in the Western OSK. Although Russia has abolished the majority of its divisions/regiments in favor of brigades, a few divisions still exist in the Russian Ground Forces, and some will be subordinated to the 1st Guards Tank Army. In addition, these armies, which in terms of size and combat power probably more closely resemble small U.S. Army corps, will be the first units equipped with the new Kurganets-25 infantry fighting vehicles and T-14 tanks.

Russia is also establishing an air force and air defense army in its newly created Northern OSK. (In the Russian system, the Russian Air Force manages both airframes and certain air defense artillery systems.) Although few details were provided, it appears that the command and control of this army will differ from other such armies in other military districts. Whether this difference is due to the peculiarities of the remote region or is related to the recent announcement of the merging of the Air Force and the Aerospace Defense Troops has yet to be seen, as Russia often tests new organizational structures and relationships before wide-scale implementation. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** “Tank Army Will Be Formed Near Moscow by Winter,” TASS Online, 29 July 2015, <<http://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/2150702>>, accessed 9 August 2015.

## ***Tank Army Will Be Formed Near Moscow by Winter***

*The Russian Defense Ministry will set up a new 20th Guards Combined-Arms Army by the end of 2015... It will include the 9th Tank Brigade based in Nizhniy Novgorod. “Other tank and motor-rifle brigades for this army are being formed” from scratch as the bulk of the current 20th Army’s units have been transferred into the newly formed 1st Guards Tank Army, the report quoted an unnamed senior source in the General Staff of the Armed Forces as saying.*

*...the 1st Guards Tank Army...will include the 4th Guards Kantemirovskaya Tank Division, the 2nd Guards Tamanskaya Motor-Rifle Division, the 6th Tank Brigade and the 27th Guards Sevastopolskaya Motor-Rifle Brigade...*

*The two new armies will be similar, the source said. Each will have a reconnaissance brigade, an air defence brigade, a material and technical support brigade, missile and artillery units, a helicopter regiment, reconnaissance and attack unmanned aerial vehicle units. The 1st Tank Army will have more tanks than the 20th Combined-Arms Army, while the latter will have more infantry fighting vehicles.*

*The formation of the Western Military District’s new armies is to be completed by 1 December. Each of these armies already has its headquarters: the 1st Tank Army in Bakovka, the 20th Combined-Arms Army in Voronezh.*

*...the 1st Guards Tank Army and the 20th Guards Combined-Arms Army will be the first in Russia to take delivery of “new generation” Armata tanks and Kurganets infantry fighting vehicles. “Their re-equipment” with new hardware will start in “2016-2017”...*

**Source:** Aleksandr Stepanov, “Russia Expands Arctic Military Grouping: Air Force and Air Defense Army to Be Part of Northern Fleet,” MK Online, 27 July 2015, <<http://www.mk.ru/politics/2015/07/26/rossiya-narashhivaet-voennuyu-gruppirovku-v-arktike.html>>, accessed 15 August 2015.

## ***Russia Expands Arctic Military Grouping: Air Force and Air Defense Army to Be Part of Northern Fleet***

*The “North” Joint Strategic Command (OSK) created at the end of last year on the basis of the Northern Fleet will be reinforced by an air force and air defense (PVO) army. This reinforcement is being conducted in connection with the expansion of tasks for the protection of Russia’s national interests in the Arctic...*

*The news about OSK North starting to incorporate an air force and PVO army in its structure was announced by Admiral Vladimir Korolev, commander of the Northern Fleet, the day before the celebration of Navy Day. “We have already started work on adding the air force and PVO army to the Northern Fleet structure. At the same time we are working on improving the coastal troops’ command and control structure and increasing their capabilities,” the admiral said, explaining that this reinforcement was prompted by the expansion of the Arctic region’s defense tasks...As of now an anti-aircraft division and a mixed aviation unit have already been added to the structure of OSK North. Full staffing is projected for completion within a year...*

*“This is only the beginning of a major structural reorganization that is happening in the Northern Fleet in conjunction with the expansion of tasks for the protection of Russian Federation national interests in the Arctic,” Korolev promised.*

*Speaking particularly about the Arctic region, it will be reinforced with MiG-31 fighter-interceptors as well as aircraft capable of long-distance radar detection. Beside that, Su-30 and Su-35 fighters may also be involved in the defense of the Arctic sky. In addition, the Arctic region will be reinforced with electronic warfare and reconnaissance assets, with the latest radar tracking stations, including over-the-horizon observation assets, as well as with Pantsir-S and S-400 surface-to-air missile systems... these means will be placed along the Northern sea route...*

*In the Arctic region as a whole it is planned to construct 13 airfields, one surface aviation test range, and 10 radar unit technical positions and aircraft orientation points.*

# Russia's View of the Definition and Origins of "Hybrid War"

9 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** The accompanying articles discuss a very common view in Russian military and security circles about the nature of hybrid war. Hybrid warfare is not seen as a Russian strategy that was used to conduct actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, but instead as the U.S./Western way of conducting warfare. The gist of this Russian definition is that hybrid war is a combination of political, diplomatic, information, propaganda, financial, economic, and military measures intended to enact regime change, partition territory, and generally interfere with the internal affairs of other states: this is "hybrid warfare" as practiced by the U.S./West in Kosovo, the Color Revolutions and the Arab Spring.

Interestingly, Major General I.N. Vorobyov's and Colonel V.A. Kiselyov's definition and stated belief in the origin of "hybrid war" is nearly identical to the term "indirect and asymmetric methods," as discussed by Chief of the Russian General Staff General Valeri Gerasimov. It appears that they have done as many others in the West, i.e., simply describing indirect and asymmetric methods as hybrid war.

Another interesting aspect of their article is the view of Western special operations forces (SOF). The authors believe that SOF are key in the execution of any hybrid war scenario and point to the rapid expansion of U.S. and Western SOF capabilities in the last two decades as evidence of the efforts to further this way of warfare. (Despite all of Russia's other military improvements, there has been comparatively little expansion of SOF capabilities.) As with Gerasimov's understanding of indirect and asymmetric methods, the authors point out the risk of foreign-sponsored NGOs as primary actors in hybrid warfare, and undoubtedly views such as this are used to provide justification for the banning of foreign-sponsored and domestic NGOs that the government finds problematic. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** Major General I.N. Vorobyov (Ret.) & Colonel V.A. Kiselyov (Ret.), "Hybrid Operations: A New Type of Warfare," *Военная Мысль* [Military Thought], Volume II, 1 April 15 - 30 June 15.

## *Hybrid Operations: A New Type of Warfare*

*Hybrid warfare, a concept that was born and gained currency in the West in the early 2010s, is, in the view of foreign experts, a new form of combat operations...A hybrid warfare operation is, to our mind, an attempt to cut off a part of another country's territory by using a combination of coordinated political, diplomatic, information, propaganda, financial, economic, and military measures. No military campaign in its traditional understanding is launched, though. Instead, an operation can be conducted by Special Operations Forces (SOF), including armed paramilitary units raised and trained on the target territory that can block off that country's regular army units.*

*Hybrid operations are planned and carried out on the basis of relevant political decisions and employ an adequate number of special operations forces deployed within tight time frames and supported by the population in the target country's part to be annexed or, for a start, separated from the rest of the country's territory, and clandestine recruitment of opposition-controlled paramilitary groups that are given training in conducting combat operations unassisted to destabilize the political, economic, and social situation on the territory under their control.*

*The underlying principles of these operations were developed in the NATO Joint Forces as a fully effective way of achieving NATO's military strategic goals and are exemplified by the purposes of the Alliance's joint forces that are given operational and combat training and are practicing all types of military action, including large-scale conflicts involving their SOF...*

*The current practice of removing regimes unpalatable to the West by launching operations supported by internal opposition and setting the stage for Color Revolutions to be engineered has been tested in many places around the world. The North Atlantic Alliance tried out the principles set out in the DOD's Joint Visions in Afghanistan in 2001, Egypt in 2012, and Libya a year earlier, in 2011, where it achieved its objectives, partly with approval of the United Nations Organization in a resolution it passed for a no-fly zone to be enforced over that country.*

*...special operations forces have a major part in the military component of hybrid operations and capabilities to achieve their government's political and economic objectives at any point of the world. They step in after diplomats have failed to distract the target countries' attention from foreign affairs, saddle them with domestic problems, rock their political systems, and destabilize the local situation. Special operations forces recruit, train, and direct insurgencies and sweep foreign leaders their governments do not have a heart to off the board on foreign soil without requiring authorization or sanctions from anyone.*

**Source:** "Hybrid Wars: US Gov't, Wall Street Moguls Playing Dirty to Come Out on Top," *Sputnik News Online*, 9 August 2015, <<http://sputniknews.com/politics/20150809/1025564847.html>>, accessed 10 August 2015.

## *Hybrid Wars: US Gov't, Wall Street Moguls Playing Dirty to Come Out on Top*

*Incredible as it may sound, there is a close connection between war in the military theatre and "economic warfare," Professor Michel Chossudovsky notes...that an act of war is "invariably" an economic undertaking in compliance with dominant corporate interests.*

*"US led wars in the Middle East under the humanitarian mantle of the 'global war on terrorism' largely serve the interests of Wall Street, the Anglo-American oil conglomerates, the so-called 'defense contractors,' the biotech conglomerates (Monsanto et al), Big Pharma and the corporate media," Professor Chossudovsky highlighted...*

*"While the Pentagon and NATO coordinate military operations against sovereign countries, Wall Street carries out concurrent destabilizing actions on financial markets including the rigging of the oil, gold and foreign exchange markets directed against Russia and China," the professor pointed out, adding that the so-called "financial warfare" is usually implemented alongside actions of the US-NATO military machine...*

*The economist stressed that there is enough evidence to confirm the fact that the Wall Street mega-banks and their affiliate hedge funds have an important influence on the US government including the State Department, the White House and the Pentagon.*

*There is an intricate system of "cross-appointments" accompanied by corporate lobbying. For instance, national security advisors and former Pentagon officials could be appointed to the World Bank, while former government top officials could assume consulting positions with influential financial institutions. At the same time, Wall Street bankers gain key positions in the US government...*

## Detailed Description of Russian GRU Utilization in Eastern Ukraine

31 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** The establishment of Russian Special Operations Command caused some speculation that the Russian Federation had decided to emulate the U.S. and Western model of special operations forces (SOF). Despite this new command, however, Russia has made little effort to expand its SOF capabilities and has been very content (and arguably successful) with using other elite forces (airborne, naval infantry, etc.), even mechanized conventional forces, to perform many activities that would be considered SOF missions in the West. (For more information on Russia's Special Operation's Command see: Russian Federation to Develop Special Operations Forces Command [http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/OEWatch/201304/Russia\\_02.html](http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/OEWatch/201304/Russia_02.html)).

The accompanying article from a pro-Ukrainian source explains well the function and roles of GRU spetsnaz units allegedly operating in eastern Ukraine. The article states, as Soviet/Russian doctrine has traditionally mandated, that GRU spetsnaz are primarily an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance asset that only engages in direct action when necessary. The article also mentions another function of the GRU spetsnaz, that of organizers and trainers of insurgent/partisan forces. This function is very similar to the mission of U.S. Army special forces, but unlike U.S. special operations units in general, and U.S. Army special forces units in particular, Russian GRU spetsnaz are considered to be just a supporting effort to Russian conventional forces. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** "Military Expert Explains Who Putin's 'Tourists' Are and What Small-Group Warfare is," *Glavred.info*, 31 July 2015, <<http://glavred.info/politika/voenny-ekspert-obyasnil-kto-takie-turisty-putina-i-chto-takoe-voyna-malyh-grupp-329897.html>>, accessed 15 August 2015.

### *Military Expert Explains Who Putin's 'Tourists' Are and What Small-Group Warfare is*

*Russian Federation GRU spetsnaz subunits are operating on Ukrainian territory. At various times during the Russian-Ukrainian war the total number of Russian Federation spetsnaz troops in the Donets Basin have averaged 3-4 interservice detachments/battalions each numbering 250-300 fighters.*

*... apart from MoD spetsnaz personnel, other Russian Federation spetsnaz units are present, including the Federal Security Service, Foreign Intelligence Service, Border Service, Federal Protection Service, and others are also operating in Ukraine. Each of them has its own tasks and objectives. Frequently not only do they not cooperate but they even compete with each other...*

*MoD spetsnaz focus on primarily military matters [direct action, reconnaissance, etc.] rather than political-subversion activities. They primarily "work" directly against units and subunits of our counterterrorist operation groups [conventional and irregular (militia) Ukrainian military units]... Apart from direct action behind enemy lines, these personnel are engaged in the training, manning, instruction, deployment and organization of local "trusted" personnel and militants recruited from all over Russia...*

*...An interservice detachment/battalion usually consists of groups of 10-12 service personnel each (more rarely 5-6). Their main purpose is to find out about the Ukrainian counterterrorist operation grouping's defense system and its combat procedures, command and control systems, and combat and logistical support systems. They usually operate through infiltration and observation and make active use of technical gadgets like drones, radio scanners, and concealed remote-controlled video and photographic cameras, and they interact extremely closely with the signals intelligence subunits that are also present. They get involved in firefights only in exceptional cases. They may attack in order to capture a prisoner, a piece of weaponry, or documents but try to operate in an exceptionally low-key manner...*



Russian Spetsnaz GRU (2008)

Source: by Aleksey Yermolov - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russian\\_Spetsnaz\\_GRU\\_\(2008\).jpg#/media/File:Russian\\_Spetsnaz\\_GRU\\_\(2008\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russian_Spetsnaz_GRU_(2008).jpg#/media/File:Russian_Spetsnaz_GRU_(2008).jpg)

# Prompt Global Strike Program Drives Russian Aerospace Reforms

3 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:**

Russian security circles are extremely concerned about the US Air Force's Global Strike Command, which, according to Russian sources, has the mission of providing strategic nuclear deterrence and operations to carry out conventional strikes.

Russia believes that the Global Strike Command has developed a program called "Prompt Global Strike" (PGS) as a way of neutralizing Russian military capabilities by eliminating both offensive and defensive Russian strategic deterrent forces without using nuclear weapons. In a conventional large-scale nuclear attack, the adversary's military units, leadership, C2, military industry complex, power supply, and transportation facilities were all targeted for destruction. In a PGS attack, only military targets (launch vehicles) capable of inflicting damage on US territory and its military are targeted with conventional munitions. In the Russian view, this objective is an order of magnitude easier to accomplish and could be done with fewer than 1,000 cruise missiles. By some Russian estimates, up to 80% of Russia's nuclear arsenal could be destroyed without the use of any U.S. nuclear weapons. Russia has also been particularly interested in the U.S.'s development of hypersonic missile and hypersonic missile launch platforms, and how these assets could be integrated into PGS.

The accompanying articles discuss reforms and modernizations that Russia believes *(continued)*

*“if Russia acquires the capability to destroy US military satellites in low orbits, this will entail rendering the American army blind and deaf, and precision ‘smart’ weapons will be turned into scrap metal.”*

— Konstantin Dushenov, Director of the Analytical Information Agency



Minister of Defense, Sergey Shoigu  
Source: <http://vitalykuzmin.net/?q=node/611>

**Source:** "Aerospace Forces Created in the Russian Armed Forces," *Interfax Online*, 3 August 2015, <<http://www.interfax.ru/russia/457604>>, accessed 15 August 2015.

***Aerospace Forces Created in the Russian Armed Forces***

*In compliance with the Russian presidential decree, a new branch of Russia's Armed Forces - the Aerospace Forces - began tackling its tasks from August 1, Russian Defense Minister Gen. Sergei Shoigu said during a conference call on Monday...*

*"Their creation was prompted by a shift of the 'center of gravity' in combat struggle to the aerospace sphere," the minister said...*

*"First and foremost, this will make it possible to concentrate the entire responsibility for forming a military-technological policy aimed at developing the forces tackling tasks in the aerospace sphere in a 'single pair of hands', secondly, make their use more effective by promoting closer integration, and, thirdly, ensure the step-by-step development of the country's aerospace defense system," the minister said.*

*The new Aerospace Forces include the Air Force, the Air Defense and Missile Defense Forces and the Space Forces, a Russian Defense Ministry source told Interfax-AVN.*

*"All of them will tackle their tasks as intended. At the same time, all forces and personnel will report to a single command center - the Main Command of the Aerospace Forces. The Aerospace Forces' Main Command, for its part, will report to the country's National Defense Control Center," he said.*

*The merger of the Air Force and the Aerospace Defense Forces will provide a comprehensive approach to countering ballistic and aerodynamic targets both in outer space and in the air, he said.*

*"It will be a comprehensive system, which will help detect and eliminate targets even at distant approaches. It can be viewed as our response to the Prompt Global Strike concept being implemented by the U.S.," the source said.*

## Continued: Prompt Global Strike Program Drives Russian Aerospace Reforms

are key to reducing the risk of a PGS attack that would leave Russia without a strategic nuclear deterrent. In terms of organizational reforms, the Russian Air Force is merging with the Aerospace Defense Troops to form a unified Air and Space Command to more aptly defend Russian airspace. (For more information on this reform see: "Air Force and Aerospace Defense Troops May Be Combined" [http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/OEWatch/201502/Russia\\_04.html](http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/OEWatch/201502/Russia_04.html).)

Russia is also modernizing and developing new facilities for space monitoring, as well as considering the deployment of a new generation of surveillance satellites. Interestingly, Russia does not see antiballistic missile defenses (which Russia also possesses) as the only way of countering PGS, and appears to believe that destroying U.S. navigation and communication satellites may also be effective.  
**End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** Vladimir Mukhin: "Defense Ministry Has Opened a 'Window' Into Space," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* Online, <[http://www.ng.ru/armies/2015-07-27/2\\_space.html](http://www.ng.ru/armies/2015-07-27/2_space.html)>, accessed 27 July 2015.

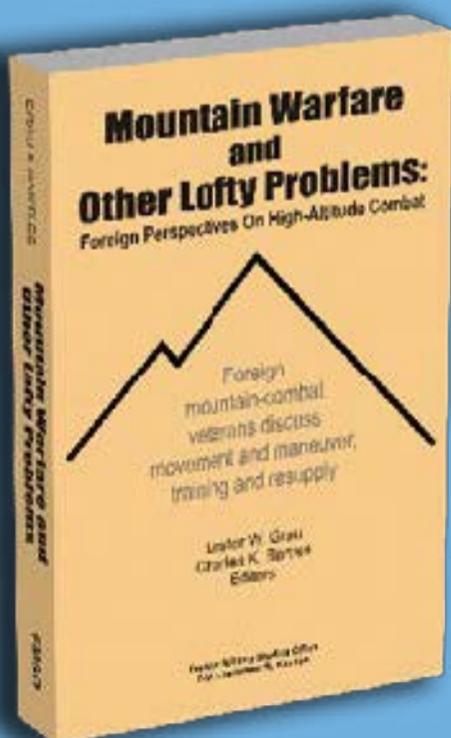
### ***Defense Ministry Has Opened a 'Window' Into Space***

*Russia, it appears, is earnestly preparing to parry threats from potential Star Wars, which once again have become a topic of conversation in the United States. The Aerospace Defense (VKO) Troops have already begun building a new generation of specialized ground-based space monitoring facilities. The Russian Federation's Ministry of Defense reports that the Tajikistan-based Okno-M optoelectronic facility for the detection of space objects has undergone successful modernization...*

*...in the event the Pentagon deploys weapons in space the Okno facility will be capable of detecting them. And, evidently, the VKO Troops are already preparing to destroy them. At any rate, the media -- citing the US Air Force's official spokesperson -- maintain that Russia has already deployed an "antisatellite weapon" in space. If we allow for the fact that, according to the official data that VKO Troops Commander Aleksandr Golovko has cited on more than one occasion, in the near future the Russian military satellite grouping will show a severalfold increase, then, naturally enough, there have to be the appropriate reconnaissance and target designation assets for them... according to Aleksandr Golovko, the Russian Federation will establish the Unified Space System comprising 10 satellites...*

*Konstantin Dushenov, director of the Analytical Information Agency, believes that "if Russia (or China) acquires the capability to destroy US military satellites in low orbits, this will entail rendering the American army blind and deaf, and precision 'smart' weapons will be turned into scrap metal. Here is why the Americans are worried. Because this antisatellite weapon is being actively developed by both Moscow and Beijing." In the expert's opinion, "if Washington is the first to decide to deploy weapons in space on a permanent basis (on the pretext, say, of protecting its satellites), this may provoke a sharp acceleration in the arms race. And it is by no means a fact that the United States can win this race."*

*...Russia is preparing not only to repulse missile strikes from space but will be capable of destroying the satellites that control them. Of course, the Americans' possible employment of weapons in space is promoting an arms race...*



The United States Army has been involved in a mountain war for a decade. After all this time, mountain combat remains a stubbornly difficult mission and technology can offer only modest support to the infantry's mission of closing with the enemy or the logistician's mission of getting support forward. This book by Les Grau and Chuck Bartles covers operations and tactics, artillery, and aviation support, reconnaissance, communications, training, and logistics in the mountains. This book is not United States Army doctrine. Rather, it is offered as an alternate view to a most-challenging military environment.

## Russian Strategic Mobility: Getting to, and then Sustaining the Fight

30 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** One, often overlooked component of Russia's "New Look" reforms was the restructuring of the Russian combat service and combat service support structures. Russia inherited the Soviet system of "rear services" and "technical support" branches that were responsible for varying aspects of logistics and maintenance. The "New Look" reforms merged these branches into a singular material-technical support (MTO) branch, with the intent to streamline parallel support structures and reduce inefficiencies. This reform also introduced a program that reduced the number uniformed organizational and depot-level maintenance personnel in favor of contracted logistics. As with any major reform, there have been glitches; material and maintenance concerns are often mentioned by Russian maneuver commanders. Despite some aspects of logistics reforms being walked back, such as contracted maintenance, the current MTO system appears to be the future of Russian logistics.

The accompanying interview with General Dmitriy Bulgakov, Deputy Defense Minister of the Russian Federation and the top Russian logistics officer, discusses some of the recent successes of Russia's MTO system. Unsurprisingly, railroad operations are frequently mentioned, as railroads are Russia's primary means of getting war fighters and their supplies to the front. In the spirit of "train-like-you-fight," Russia has even incorporated logistical training into unit movements to exercises and training areas. In the past the Soviets/Russians would move troops to pre-staged equipment to ease logistical burdens and costs. After much criticism of the Russian military's ability to mass combat power in recent conflicts (Chechnya, the 2008 Russo-Georgian War), Russia now regularly moves units and their equipment considerable distances to training areas to practice the art and science of mass unit movements. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**



General Dmitriy Bulgakov, Deputy Defense Minister of the Russian Federation

Source: <http://vtruda.ru/obshchestvo/armiya/zheleznaya-volya-voinov-zheleznodorozhnikov-20-06-2014>

**Source:** Viktor Khudoleyev, "MTO System: In Step with the Times," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 30 July 2015, <<http://redstar.ru/index.php/newspaper/item/25105-sistema-mto-v-nogu-so-vremenem>>, accessed 15 August 2015.

### ***MTO System: In Step with the Times***

***...Five years have elapsed since the establishment of an integrated system of logistics support. Dmitriy Vitalyevich, has life confirmed the correctness of the decisions taken?***

*Today the logistics support system conforms fully to the structure of Armed Forces command and control. Logistics support specialists are operating 24 hours a day to support the performance of nuclear deterrence, alert duty, and combat duty missions, missions to show a presence on the high seas, counterpiracy and spacecraft launch missions, combat training missions, and administrative activities...We are the people who are responsible for the upkeep of the military posts and the basing facilities for aircraft and naval forces, we are responsible for their provision with hot and cold water and with heat and electric power, for their environmental and fire safety.*

***Logistics support system exercises held last year -- Krasnaya Zvezda reported on them -- rehearsed a large number of unique episodes.***

*The next special exercise for the logistics support system will take place 24 through 28 August simultaneously on the territories of two military districts -- the Western and the Central. A very large sequence of missions will be rehearsed, including the laying of an NZhM-56 floating bridge with an overall length of around 800 meters across the Volga River at Yaroslavl. And we will be constructing a roughly 350-meter-long combined road/rail bridge on the Vyatka River...*

***In practical terms we have indeed entered the technotronic age. What's new at the level of upgrading the infrastructure of the logistics support system?***

*...We are building five state-of-the-art refueling facilities at airfields (Domna, Akhtubinsk, Chkalovskiy, Kol'tsovo, Kursk) and we are also conducting design and survey work for the construction of a further six refueling facilities in 2016. The construction and commissioning of 450 storage facilities at 13 integrated-storage arsenals and their loading with missiles and ammunition should be completed this year. It is intended building 24 industrial logistics facilities by 2019, with two of them (in Naro-Fominsk and Armavir) scheduled for commissioning this year...*

*(continued)*

## Continued: Russian Strategic Mobility: Getting to, and then Sustaining the Fight

*The return of Crimea to Russia has presented the army with a number of challenges -- laying on a water supply for the Crimeans, for example...*

*This has been a particularly important challenge for the pipe-laying subunits. In 2015 subunits of the Western and Eastern Military Districts have worked on laying main pipelines intended for the provision of Crimea with fresh water. In very short order they completed the installation of 48 pipelines with a total length in excess of 412 km. We have delivered around 3 million cubic meters of potable water from artesian wells along main pipelines to dozens of populated sites in Crimea.*

**How many men are you having to support in remote northern regions?**

*An important undertaking of a socioeconomic nature performed for many decades now by Defense Ministry forces during the navigation season is that of organizing the provision of over 21,000 servicemen and family members with all the essentials, and we are talking not just about the military department here but other federal executive agencies too. This relates to 184 not easily accessible areas of the High North, Siberia, and the Far East. The 2014 northern shipment resulted in the delivery of over 123,000 tonnes of diverse materiel, inclusive of resources to support the reestablished military infrastructure on Ostrov Zemlya Aleksandry, Ostrov Kotel'nyy, Wrangel Island, and Mys Shmidta. It is planned to deliver more than 140,000 tonnes of diverse materiel during the 2015 navigation season...*

**Aside from intradepartmental issues, the Railroad Troops are involved in a serious state undertaking to construct the Zhuravka-Millerovo railroad. What has already been done?**

*[Bulgakov] Russia's Railroad Troops are engaged in constructing a double-track electrified railroad on a 20-km-long sector and are filling the roadbed and installing track superstructure on a stretch running from the 11th through the 31st km. The planned volume of earth works already amounts to more than 4.5 million cubic meters. Around 350 pieces of equipment and something like 900 personnel have been mobilized to perform this mission.*

*As of today the Railroad Troops have completed almost 2 million cubic meters of earth works. We will exert maximum effort to hand everything over to the client on schedule. We are currently one month ahead on all schedules...*



Source: <http://vtruda.ru/obshchestvo/armiya/zheleznaya-volya-voinov-zheleznodorozhnikov-20-06-2014>

**Source:** "Naval Infantry Subunits Have Begun Instruction at Western Military District 's Newest Combat Training Center," Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 10 August 2015, <[http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12048589@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12048589@egNews)>, accessed 15 August 2015.

### **Naval Infantry Subunits Have Begun Instruction at Western Military District 's Newest Combat Training Center**

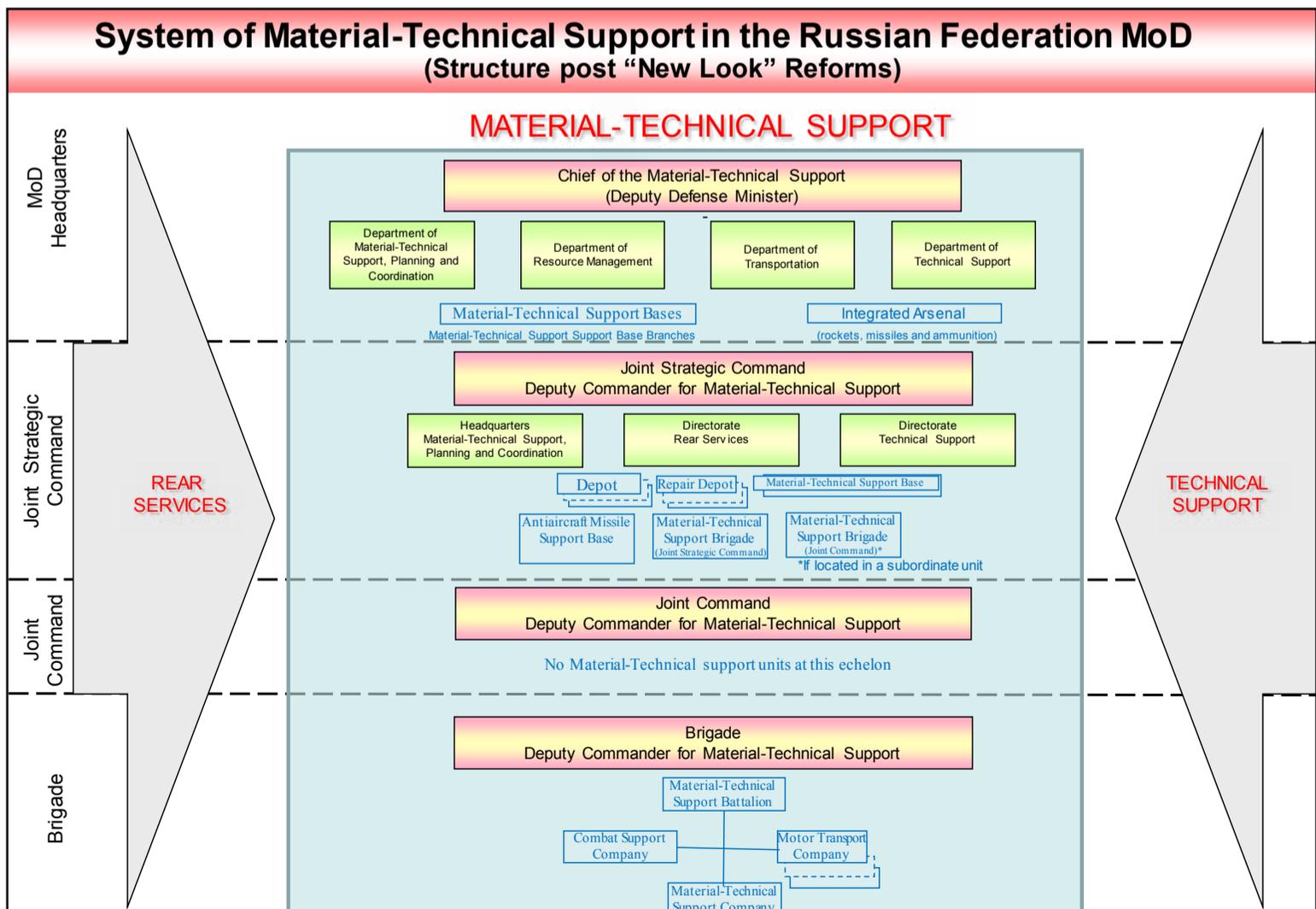
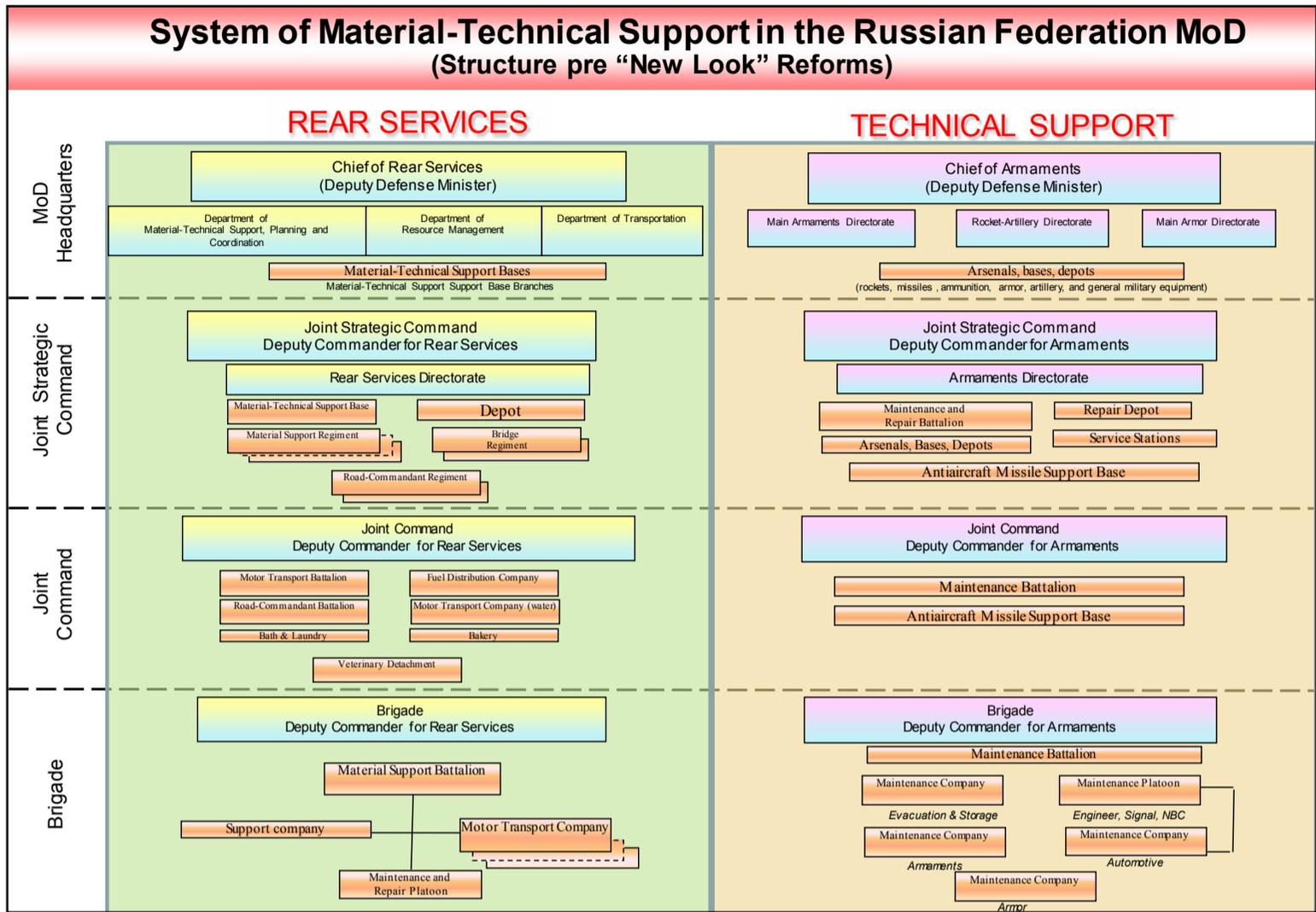
*More than 600 men of a Northern Fleet separate naval infantry formation have begun assimilating a seven-week course of instruction at the Western Military District's 333rd Combat Training Center in Mulino.*

*Naval infantry units of the Northern Fleet Coastal Defense Troops will be rehearsing for the first time the skills involved in conducting a combined-arms engagement on an unfamiliar training range, which will substantially increase their combat proficiency. For their part, command personnel are to learn to employ information from unmanned air vehicles in the interests of the delivery of fire for effect by heavy artillery in different types of engagement. The training program also makes provision for the rehearsal of collaboration by ground-attack aircraft and helicopter squadrons to deliver massive air strikes against an adversary and to land a tactical assault force.*

*Particular attention in the course of the subunits' instruction is being given to classes on the theme "combat in a built-up area," which are being held at a specialized range equipped with actual-scale "administrative" and "residential" buildings. Also, one distinctive feature of the naval infantrymen's course of instruction will be the rehearsal of tactical operations in forested terrain uncharacteristic of the northern latitudes. Today the subunits will begin company-level teamwork and coordination training at the ranges and on simulator units...*

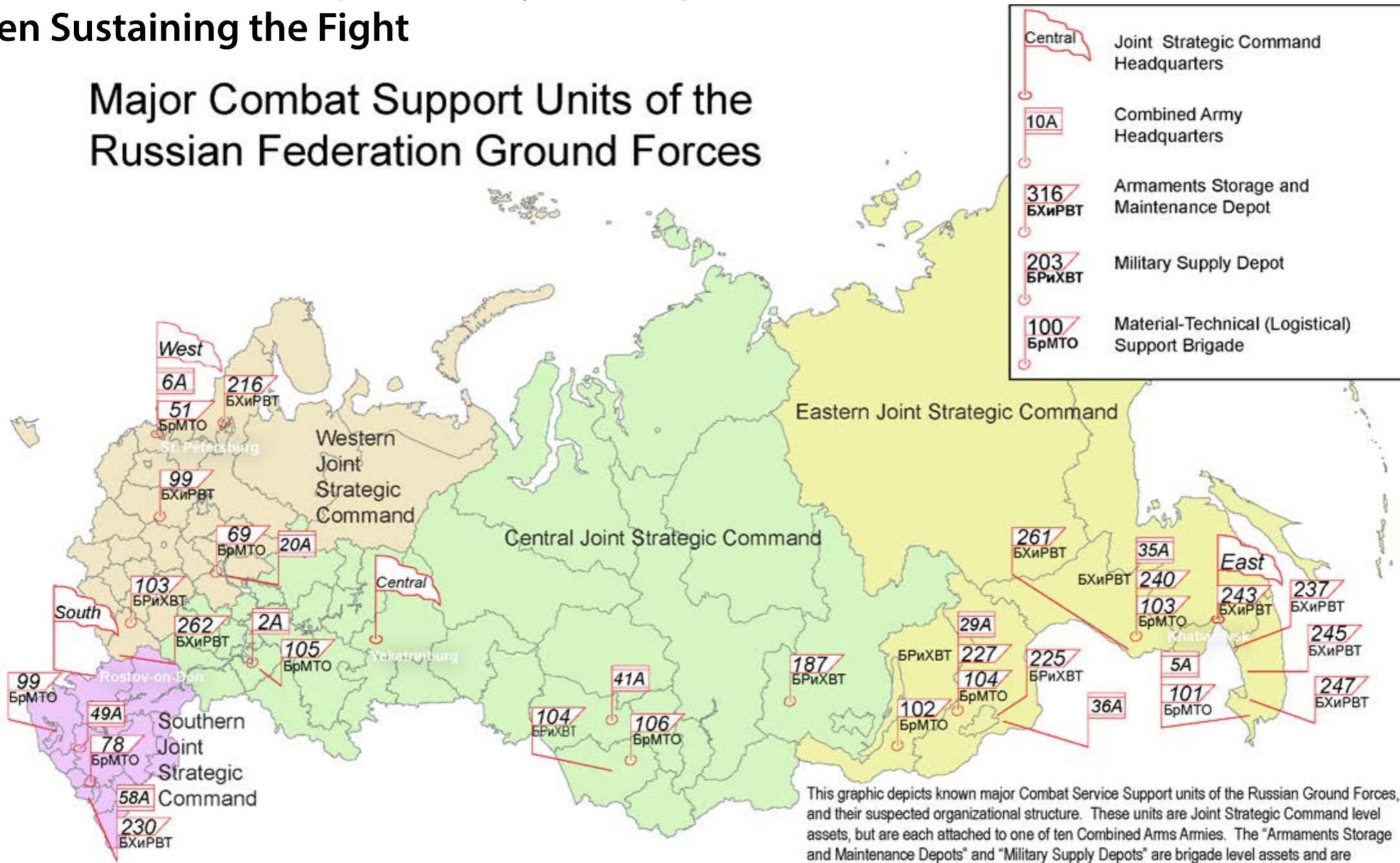
*Railroad transport was utilized to preposition over 160 pieces of combat equipment from the permanent deployment location in Murmanskaya Oblast to the Mulino Garrison, a distance of more than 2,000 km.*

## Continued: Russian Strategic Mobility: Getting to, and then Sustaining the Fight



## Continued: Russian Strategic Mobility: Getting to, and then Sustaining the Fight

### Major Combat Support Units of the Russian Federation Ground Forces



This graphic depicts known major Combat Service Support units of the Russian Ground Forces, and their suspected organizational structure. These units are Joint Strategic Command level assets, but are each attached to one of ten Combined Arms Armies. The "Armaments Storage and Maintenance Depots" and "Military Supply Depots" are brigade level assets and are presumably tasked to provide logistical support and maintenance services to the maneuver brigades. The "Material-Technical Support Brigade" is a new structure in the Russian Ground Forces that brings units from the Soviet era "Rear Services" and "Armaments Branch" under one command. Each Combined Arms Army has a supporting "Material-Technical Support Brigade" and it appears that the size, composition and capabilities of the brigades are far from uniform, ranging from motor transport and supply to pipeline construction and route security.

Western Joint Strategic Command		Southern Joint Strategic Command		Central Joint Strategic Command		Eastern Joint Strategic Command			
6th Army (St. Petersburg)	20th Army (Nizhniy Novgorod)	49th Army (Stavropol)	58th Army (Vladikavkaz)	2nd Army (Samara)	41st Army (Novosibirsk)	29th Army (Chita)	35th Army (Belogorsk)	38th Army (Borzya)	5th Army (Ussuriysk)
51 БрМТО (St. Petersburg)	БрМТО 69 (Molino)	99 БрМТО (Maykop)	78 БрМТО (Prokhladny)	105 БрМТО (Roshinsky)	101 БрМТО (Novosibirsk)	104 БрМТО (Chita)	103 БрМТО (Belogorsk)	102 БрМТО (Gusinoozorskiy)	101 БрМТО (Ussuriysk)
216 БХиРВТ (Petrozavodsk)	99 БХиРВТ (Tver)		230 БХиРВТ (Dachnoye)	262 БХиРВТ (Boguchar)	104 БРиХВТ (Aleysk)	227 БРиХВТ (Divisonaya)	240 БХиРВТ (Belogorsk)	225 БРиХВТ (Yasnaya)	237 БХиРВТ (Bikin)
	103 БРиХВТ (Shilovo)				187 БРиХВТ (Nizhneudinsk)		261 БХиРВТ (Makovaya Pad)		245 БХиРВТ (Lesozavodsk)
							243 БХиРВТ (Khabarovsk)		247 БХиРВТ (Sibirsevo)

## Reactions in Georgia to Russia's New Naval Doctrine

27-28 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 26 July 2015 Russia's President Vladimir Putin approved amendments to Russia's naval doctrine. It envisions a Russian navy that is particularly active in the Atlantic and the Arctic, in light of what the Kremlin describes as NATO's "unacceptable" plans to expand its global reach and to pose, in the Kremlin's view, a threat to Russia by moving some forces closer to Russia's borders in areas the Kremlin considers Russia's privileged sphere of influence.

Putin had adopted Russia's naval doctrine in 2001, a year after assuming his first term as Russia's president. Prior to July 2015 he had approved the latest amendments in December 2014.

While Ukraine remains in the headlines when it comes to Russia and NATO, Georgia is another important country in this regard. Georgia had taken a decidedly pro-Western posture in 2004 and became the West's closest ally in the South Caucasus, while undergoing a number of pro-democratic domestic economic and political reforms. In addition, Georgia had bid for a NATO membership.

The accompanying excerpts present a brief report about the new naval doctrine from the Kremlin perspective, and responses from Georgia in Russian-language publications. Officially, according to the accompanying excerpt from *Georgia Online*, Georgia is not concerned with Russia's announcement. Georgian State Minister for European Integration David Bakradze believes it will not hinder Georgia's pro-Western aspirations. Similarly, according to both Bakradze and Georgian Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli, Tbilisi cares more about NATO's than Russia's documents.

Nonetheless, some in Georgia, like Irakli Aladashvili, the chief editor of the military-analytical magazine *Arsenal*, quoted in the accompanying excerpt from *RosInvest.com*, are concerned about Russia's new doctrine. He feels that, in part, Russia's new naval doctrine is directed towards Georgia, and the Kremlin will do everything to prevent Georgia from joining NATO. According to him, had Russia not been distracted by annexing Crimea, it would have already moved on the Gudauta military base in Abkhazia. A former Soviet Air Defense Forces base, Gudauta remains among chief issues of contention between Russia and Georgia following Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

**Source:** Alexei Avakov, "В России из-за присоединения Крыма и расширения НАТО изменена морская доктрина" (In Russia, Due to Crimea's Joining and NATO Expansion, Navy Doctrine is Changed), *Mbsz.ru*, 27 July 2015. <http://mbsz.ru/?p=19954>

*Russia's President Vladimir Putin approved during a meeting on board of frigate "Soviet Union Fleet Admiral Gorshkov" amendments to Russia's Navy Doctrine.*

*According to Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, reasons for adopting the amendments to the Sea Doctrine were the change in the international situation, the situation in the world and the strengthening of Russia as a naval power.*

*The main emphasis is on the direction of the Atlantic, where quite active development of the North Atlantic Alliance is taking place, and the alliance's movement towards Russia's borders, integration into the economic activity of the Crimea and Sevastopol, as well as restoration of Russian navy's presence in the Mediterranean...*

**Source:** "Морская доктрина России не мешает устремлениям Грузии - Давид Бакрадзе" (Russia's Naval Doctrine does not Interfere with Georgia's Aspirations), *Georgia Online*, 28 July 2015. <http://www.apsny.ge/2015/mil/1438110558.php>

*Georgia's State Minister for European integration David Bakradze believes that Russia's new sea doctrine of Russia will not interfere with Georgia's aspirations.*

*... Recall that Russia has adopted the Naval Doctrine, which emphasized the unacceptability of NATO's staying at the borders of Russia's military infrastructure of NATO and assigning it a global function...*

*Commenting on this fact Georgia's Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli and George Bakradze stressed yesterday, July 27, that for Georgia it is more important what document will NATO adopt, rather than Russia's military doctrine...*

**Source:** "Россия сделает все, чтобы Грузия не стала членом НАТО" (Russia will do Everything so that Georgia does not Become NATO Member) 28 July 2015 <http://rosinvest.com/novosti/1216949>

*Had it not been for Crimea's "annexation," Russia would have switched to the restoration of the military base in Gudauta.*

*Russia's position is clear: if NATO will continue to expand East in the direction of Russia's borders, this will threaten its [Russia's] security. Chief editor of the military-analytical magazine "Arsenal" Irakli Aladashvili made this comment to REGNUM about the amendments to Russia's Naval Doctrine...*

*According to him, the new document considered by Russia, to a certain extent is based on Georgia's aspirations to become a NATO member, and Russia will do everything so that Georgia does not reach this goal...*

## Does ISIS Pose a Threat to Georgia?

June 25, July 29 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** In June 2015 ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani announced the creation of its first administrative unit in the North Caucasus. The same month leader of the militant jihadist Caucasus Emirate Aslan Byutukayev pledged his allegiance to ISIS. While the North Caucasus has been a hotbed of international terrorist activity for years, these latest developments raised concerns in the region even further and sparked a discussion in Georgia about the threat ISIS poses to this country. Such public discussion is relatively new in Georgia. The accompanying excerpts are examples of this discussion.

The first excerpt is from *Newsgeorgia.ge*. The article quotes Georgian Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff Vakhtang Kapanadze, who stresses the need for Georgia to cooperate with partner countries, since ISIS poses both a global threat and a threat to Georgia in particular. He does not specify who these partner countries are.

The second excerpt is from *Regnum.ru*, which cites an article in Georgia's newspaper *Resonansi* that presents opposing assessments on the impact Turkey's involvement in a war with ISIS may have on Georgia. According to the article, Georgian Defense Minister Tinatin Khidasheli believes the Islamic State poses no immediate and direct threat to Georgia. Chief editor of the military-analytical magazine *Arsenal* Irakli Aladashvili disagrees. Until now Turkey had separated Georgia from the Islamic State's zone of operations, but if Turkey enters this war, he said in an interview with *Resonansi*, Georgia could become a front-line state.

Together these excerpts show that there is no consensus in Georgia on the threat ISIS poses to the country. The increased discussion on the subject in Georgia in and of itself is significant and worth following. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

**Source:** Danila Rozanov, "Исламское государство» является угрозой для Грузии – Генштаб" (Islamic State Is a Threat to Georgia, 'General Staff'), *NewsGeorgia.ge*, 25 June 2015. <http://www.newsgeorgia.ge/islamskoe-gosudarstvo-yavlyaetsya-ugrozoj-dlya-gruzii-genshtab/>

*Terrorist organization "Islamic State" (IS) presents a danger for the whole world, and for Georgia, head of Georgian Armed Forces General Staff Vakhtang Kapanadze told reporters on Thursday, June 25.*

*Agence France Press reported on June 25 that the Islamic extremists in Russia's Caucasus had sworn allegiance to the IS group. According to the agency, this is about militants operating in Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria. The agency cited a recording posted on the Internet in which a male voice sears allegiance to IS on behalf of the militants in these regions.*

*"There is no doubt that this organization (IS - Ed.) carries danger for the whole world, and for Georgia and we, as an integral part of the world, also view it as a danger," Kapanadze said, stressing the need for cooperation with partner countries...*

**Source:** "Грузия может стать прифронтовой страной – грузинские СМИ" (Georgia can become a front-line country - Georgian media), *Regnum.ru*, 29 July 2015. <http://regnum.ru/news/polit/1947180.html>

*...Turkey's involvement in a war with an Islamic state may lead to Georgia becoming a de-facto front-line state. Georgian newspaper "Resonansi" published an article on this subject, and presented opposing assessments of the threat resulting from this confrontation for Georgia.*

*Georgian Defense Minister Tinatin Khidasheli believes that no threat from the Islamic state for Georgia should be expected at this time. According to her, the responsibility for such threats is usually lies not with the Defense Ministry, but with on the security services and the Interior Ministry, but the minister assured that her ministry too is in a constant state of readiness, and if there was a such a need, this agency would help to neutralize threats. At the same time Khidasheli does not expect that Georgia may encounter problems, and emphasizes that she has no data in this regard.*

*Chief editor of the military-analytical magazine "Arsenal" Irakli Aladashvili expressed different opinion, who in an interview with "Resonansi" said that ISIS threatens the entire region. According to him, until now, Turkey had separated Georgia from the Islamic State's zone of operations, but now, if Turkey enters this war, Georgia could become a front-line state. According to Aladashvili, the situation in this region is very intertwined, and if Turkey will have to go to war, this will lead to further escalation of the situation, frequent terrorist attacks in Turkey...*

## Russia's Strategic Mobility

Supporting 'Hard Power' to 2020?

By Roger N. McDermott

[http://www.foi.se/ReportFiles/foir\\_3587.pdf](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.



# Interview with Russian Who Fought for ISIS in Syria: Civil War “Just as in Ukraine.”

5 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** On 5 August 2015 *Gazeta.ru* (Newspaper), a popular news site in Russia that in previous years had published liberal opposition-leaning articles, published an interview, excerpted here, with a 19-year-old Russian citizen from the republic of Ingushetia who fought for ISIS in Syria for approximately a year in 2013-2014 and subsequently chose to return home and participate in the republic’s official rehabilitation program. The article also provides background information about this program.

Ingushetia is located in the North Caucasus, a region that has remained unstable since the break-up of the Soviet Union and that has seen a rise of radical Islamist insurgency, especially in recent years. Some from the region have joined the ISIS cause in Syria and Iraq.

The individual in the accompanying excerpt, who asked to be identified during the interview as Ahmed Askhabov, by his own description is a professional athlete and a world mixed martial arts champion. He explains why and how he chose first to join ISIS, and then to return to peaceful life at home. He thought he was joining a good cause—to protect innocent civilians—only to discover what he saw as a raging civil war. Once he understood that he had been deceived, he began taking steps to return home. Upon his return, he was arrested and cooperated with the authorities. He served a brief jail sentence. Given his professional sports background, the authorities were lenient towards him. He then got in touch, on his own initiative, with a rehabilitation program run by Ingushetia’s Adaptation Commission, which helped reintegrate him into his community. He felt that, although he made a mistake, he deserved a second chance to re-enter “normal” life.

Importantly, Askhabov describes what he saw in Syria as a civil war, “just like in Ukraine.” In addition, when discussing why he decided to go to Syria, he says he joined for exactly the same reasons young Russian citizens joined the fight in Ukraine—that they heard they need to protect civilians. “But for some reason they [those who fought in Ukraine] walk around with medals on their chests, while I had to serve in prison,” he said.

The article provides a rare first-hand account of a Russian citizen who fought for ISIS in Syria. It also highlights the little-known rehabilitation programs in the North Caucasus for individuals like Askhabov. At the same time, Askhabov’s brief reference to the Ukrainian conflict highlights the perceived connection in Russia between Syria and Ukraine. His description of events as a “civil war” in Ukraine agrees with the Kremlin’s portrayal of the situation there, yet the negative reference to Russian citizens who chose to join the fight in Ukraine suggests disapproval—not necessarily of the Kremlin directly, but of those who join the fight in Ukraine that the Kremlin touts. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshevskaya)**

**Source:** “Там гражданская война, как и на Украине.” Интервью россиянина, воевавшего на стороне ИГИЛ и вернувшегося к мирной жизни” (‘It’s Civil War There, Just as in Ukraine’ Interview with Russian Citizen, Who Fought for ISIS and Returned to Peaceful Life), *Gazeta.ru* (Newspaper), 5 August 2015. [http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2015/08/05\\_a\\_7669209.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2015/08/05_a_7669209.shtml)

*...Ingushetia resident Askhabov Ahmed (this is how he asked to be identified) was released from prison on May 15, 2015. He was convicted of participating in an illegal armed group “Jaish al-Muhajirin wal-Ansar” in the Syrian Arab Republic from late June 2013 to April 2014...*

**- Why did you decide to go to Syria?**

*- I’ll give you an example. Remember they showed young people who traveled to Ukraine to fight? Remember how they talked about what drove them to do this? That the local authorities there, and those higher up, are bullying, torturing, and killing civilians. The same picture, to the smallest detail. But for some reason they walk around with medals on their chests, while I had to serve in prison... And I returned on my own will, no one came after me...*

**- What made you come back?**

*- I realized that they are simply luring in young people, deceiving them with the idea that the authorities are oppressing civilians. I saw this firsthand, somewhere around two month after my arrival, and from that moment on I started to take steps back in the opposite direction.*

**- Who and how lures in young people?**

*- There’s not only one group. There are dozens, if not hundreds. And each lures people there to fight a war against the government.*

**- How were you lured in?**

*- So I actually was not lured in. My pride simply did not allow me to stay behind when my friends, who trained with me, who lived with me (I studied in Moscow then), all agreed [to go]. In addition to me there were five or six people there.... [Askhabov Ahmed trained in sports all his life; he is a world mixed martial arts champion]*

**- Did you want to join a specific group?**

*- We wanted to join a concrete person, someone we knew. Not a group but a person. I followed the people. I had not one acquaintance there, I had nothing. Me and the guys who were traveling with me simply joined people who knew people there, and all that. We arrived there and were assigned. And that’s it, war...*

**- When you came home, had you met other people who went to Syria?**

*- No, I have not.*

*To me this is all like a bad dream, I try not to think about it anymore...*

**- Who turned to the Adaptation Commission?**

*- I did it myself, this is my initiative. A man makes a mistake, no one is immune from this. But he should not be immediately cut off from the world and abandoned. I began to take steps myself in the hope that people will meet me half way. I asked the Adaptation Commission about employment. The main thing that I return back to normal, in normal society...*

*... Since 2008, 67 people have been adapted. Three of them were members of the organization “Islamic State,” whose activity is banned in Russia’s territory...*

*...The Commission under the head of Ingushetia on assisting in adaptation to civilian life for those who have decided to stop their terrorist and extremist activities was established by the decree of the head of the Republic May 31, 2011.*

*The idea for the Adaptation Commission originally appeared [in] Dagestan in 2010 ... This was part of the process for the application of more lenient measures in the fight against the armed underground. At that time, in particular, in Dagestan, a dialogue began between the authorities and the Salafis... as well as between the Salafis and Sufis. The commission included representatives of all law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and importantly, there were representatives of religious organizations - both traditional Sufi and Salafi...*

## Life Insurance for Russian Soldiers

23 July 2015

*“The amount of benefit in connection with the death of a soldier is 3,506 million rubles.”*

**OE Watch Commentary:** As in many other countries, the Russian government has enacted legislation which requires obligatory state life insurance for all military personnel. According to this law, Russian service members or their family members will receive monetary benefits in the event of the soldier’s death or serious injury while on military duty. To streamline this system (and to reduce instances of corruption), some provisions in this legislation have changed over the past few years. For instance, the actual payment of benefits is now processed through private insurance companies instead of the Ministry of Defense (MoD).

The July 2015 tragedy in Omsk, where a military barracks collapsed on new recruits, killing 24 and seriously injuring 18, provides a painful example of how this insurance system operates. According to the first excerpt, in the event of the death of a soldier, the Russian insurance company SOGAZ (<https://www.sogaz.ru/>) will provide 3,506 million rubles—approximately \$58,000—to the families of those soldiers who were killed. This same amount will be paid to those soldiers who were rendered unfit for military duty from their injuries. For those who suffered a less debilitating injury, the company will pay up to \$39,000, depending upon the severity of the injury.

During a televised newscast shortly after this accident occurred, President Putin directed Minister of Defense Shoygu to personally ensure that the injured soldiers and surviving family members received adequate compensation for their losses. The second excerpt from the MoD website reflects a portion of this directive. It spells out that the MoD will cover all associated expenses to the families of injured soldiers stemming from this tragedy (e.g., travel for family members, accommodations, meals, etc.). It also directs military commissars to “personally organize... the speediest collection and processing of the documents necessary for the receipt of the full amount of the insurance payments that are due.”

Proclamations detailing how the Russian government will compensate victims of natural and manmade disasters have become commonplace over the past several years. Whether there is a flood, plane crash or other major catastrophe, publicizing victim restitution has become a high priority for the Kremlin and regional leaders. Some have suggested that these promises of compensation are a means to pacify possible public protest. If nothing else, that the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armed Forces felt compelled to direct that surviving soldiers and family members of this recent tragedy receive appropriate benefits may indicate problems with the military’s life insurance system. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

**Source:** “SOGAZ to Pay Families of Military Victims in Omsk More Than 130 Million Rubles,” *RIA Novosti*, 23 July 2015. <http://ria.ru/incidents/20150723/1144000387.html>

*The insurance group “SOGAZ” has made payments to the families of soldiers killed in the collapse of the barracks near Omsk, a total of 133.8 million rubles, of which 78.9 million rubles were transferred from the funds provided by the Ministry of Defense of Russia, according to the press service of the insurer.*

*The tragedy occurred on late in the evening on 12 July, when the four-story barracks collapsed in the village of Svetloe (Omsk Region) where 337 soldiers slept. 42 soldiers (24 dead) were found under the rubble*

*“To date, our company has almost completed the payment of relatives of the victims of paratroopers. We have been in constant contact with the Russian Ministry of Defense...”*

*...Besides, SOGAZ is authorized to make the payment of lump sum benefits in the event of the death of a serviceman or recognizing him unfit for military service. The amount of benefit in connection with the death of a soldier is 3,506 million rubles. SOGAZ make payments under the agreement with the Ministry of Defense of the funds provided by the office.*



Sogaz Logo

Source: *Wikimedia Commons*

**Source:** “Defense Ministry to Pay All Expenses of Relatives of Servicemen Hospitalized in Moscow After Tragedy in Omsk,” *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 16 July 2015. <http://www.mil.ru>

*In accordance with the instruction of Vladimir Putin, Supreme Commander in Chief of Russia’s Armed Forces, instructions have been issued by Defense Minister Army General Sergey Shoygu on the payment of all direct and associated expenses of the close relatives of servicemen of the Airborne Troops training center who are in Moscow military hospitals.*

*This relates, first and foremost, to the payment or compensation for the cost of travel for the relatives from any region to Moscow and also to the organization of their subsequent free accommodations, catering, the payment of transport and, where necessary, medical provision in the capital.*

*Also on the instruction of the head of the military department, military commissars have been set the task of personally organizing the rendering of assistance to the relatives of the airborne troops injured or killed in the speediest collection and processing of the documents necessary for the receipt of the full amount of the insurance payments that are due....*

## Higher Op-Tempo Deadly for Russian Air Force

8 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Over the past eighteen months, as tensions have increased between Russia and the West over the ongoing conflict in SE Ukraine, the Kremlin leadership has continued to flex its military muscle. Whether snap inspection to test the readiness of military units or unannounced flights of combat aircraft into foreign airspace, the Russian Armed Forces have been operating at a higher than normal military tempo. This increased military activity comes at a cost, especially among sophisticated Air Force platforms, where the margin of error can be deadly. As the brief accompanying excerpt points out, this higher level military readiness has resulted in a greater number of Air Force accidents over the past few months.

The excerpt suggests that “substandard servicing of aircraft and helicopters and the growing intensity of flight training” are the proximate causes behind this higher accident rate. The article points out that much of Russia’s Air Force inventory (40%) dates from the Soviet period and that many of these older platforms lack “automatic diagnostics,” making repairs difficult and slow. Lack of available spare parts has also taken its toll, since the supply of essential parts can sometimes take weeks.

Not surprisingly, the article also blames the changes conducted under the previous defense minister, since under these reforms many Air Force schools were closed or consolidated, leading to a “failure to train military aviation technicians.” Another aspect of these reforms dealt with consolidation of aircraft maintenance, where the maintenance of military equipment was gradually transferred to distant manufacturing plants. This attempt to gain an economy of scale in maintenance operations resulted in aircraft not receiving proper care.

The article elaborates upon the degree by which increased flight hours have strained an already weakened maintenance system. Over the past ten years Air Force flight training has increased exponentially, rising from 20 hours per year in the early 2000s to well over 100 hours today. Unfortunately for Russian pilots, there has not been a corresponding increase in overall aircraft maintenance. The article concludes by claiming that “the existing system of technical maintenance of aircraft and more frequent flights by combat aircraft urgently require reform,” and if these changes are not made, “the Russian Air Force will continue to lose combat machines in peacetime just as if the country were participating in a military operation.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

*“In the early 2000s, the average flight-time for each pilot was barely over 20 hours per year, but by 2007 this had increased to 40-50 hours, and in 2012-13 close to 100 hours.”*



Russian Su-34.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

**Source:** Vasiliy Sychev, “На честном слове и на одном крыле. Почему Россия теряет военные самолеты” [On a Wing and a Prayer; Why Russia is Losing Military Aircraft], *Slon*, 8 July 2015.

### ***On a Wing and a Prayer; Why Russia is Losing Military Aircraft***

*Five emergencies have already occurred with Russian military aircraft since the start of summer 2015 . A MiG-29 fighter crashed on 6 June at the Ashuluk range in Astrakhanskaya Oblast; on the same day an Su-34 frontline bomber skidded off the runway and overturned near Voronezh; on 8 June the engine of a Tu-95MS strategic bomber caught fire in Amurskaya Oblast; on 3 July a MiG-29 fighter came down in Krasnodarskiy Kray; and on 6 July an Su-24M bomber was involved in an accident in Khabarovskiy Kray.*

*...In Russia alone each year dozens of different sorts of problems arise with military aircraft and the general public becomes aware only of the major ones. The reasons for this increased frequency of accidents can be traced to two things: substandard servicing of aircraft and helicopters and the growing intensity of flight training.*

*According to Lieutenant-General Valeiry Gorbenko, former commander of the Air Force 4th Air Army and PVO [Air Defense] of Russia, the reason for the growing number of aircraft accidents could be the “Serdyukov reforms,” due to which for several years the flight schools did not recruit cadets, some aviation command schools were disbanded, and Defense Ministry higher educational institutions retrained soldiers as junior commanders.*

*In addition, during Anatoliy Serdyukov’s time as defense minister the maintenance of military equipment was gradually transferred to manufacturing plants. As a result the equipment did not receive the proper care....*

*...The failure to train military aviation technicians in the early 2010s could definitely be one reason for the growth in the accident rate. (continued)*

## Continued: Higher Op-Tempo Deadly for Russian Air Force

*When it is borne in mind that identical Russian fighters and bombers operate in completely different climatic conditions, the smallest technical malfunctions or defects in maintenance could lead to serious accidents.*

*In addition, Russian airbases are quite far from each other, while some of them are very distant from the manufacturing enterprises. Not all airbases by any means have the spare parts required for maintenance and repair of aircraft and helicopters, and the supply of essential parts can sometimes take weeks. This also adversely affects aircraft flight readiness and their technical reliability....*

*...To reduce the accident rate the Defense Ministry probably needs to consider involving technical experts from the manufacturers who would provide aircraft engineering support and overall supervision of the activities of Air Force engineering service technicians. The introduction of an automatic diagnostics system in all military flight equipment which would carry out tests on aircraft systems and report all errors to technicians would also help alleviate the problem. New aircraft have such systems; however, the equipment, which was already produced in the USSR, is not always available.*

*Currently the Russian Air Force is the second-largest in the world after the US. The Russian Air Force is equipped with more than 4,000 aircraft and helicopters, with about another 900 aircraft in storage. However, about 40 percent of all Russian Air Force aircraft and helicopters were inherited from the USSR.*

*Another factor affecting the accident rate is the increase in the number of military flights. The logic is simple: the more that a particular machine is flown, the sooner it wears out and the higher the probability of some failure occurring.... In the 1990s, the flight training of military pilots dropped virtually to zero; each pilot had 10-20 hours per year. In the early 2000s, the average flight-time for each pilot was barely over 20 hours per year, but by 2007 this had increased to 40-50 hours, and in 2012-13 close to 100 hours.*

*Since 2014, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, as the supreme commander, and the Defense Ministry leadership have launched unannounced troop inspections. In 2015, these checks were again increased, leading to a further increase in the number of flights. In the next few years it is planned to make flight training even more intensive, including through the supply of new and upgraded types of equipment to the troops.*

*It is important to note that the intensity of flight training is quite closely linked with the quality and speed of aircraft maintenance by the Russian Air Force engineering and technical service. Whereas ground technicians previously had time to prepare aircraft for flight and carry out maintenance and repairs between flights, this is becoming increasingly difficult to do as the schedule fills up, as well as the substantial delivery times for consumables and spare parts. How this system will be transformed (and whether that will happen) is not yet clear.*

*One thing is clear. The existing system of technical maintenance of aircraft and more frequent flights by combat aircraft urgently require reform, whether that is the establishment of an expanded network of service centers of the manufacturing plants, the presence of development bureau engineers in the units, or the organization of an extensive network of depots for spare parts and consumables, and logistics optimization. Otherwise the Russian Air Force will continue to lose combat machines in peacetime just as if the country were participating in a military operation.*



MiG-29

Source: "Soviet MiG-29 DF-ST-99-04977". Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Soviet\\_MiG-29\\_DF-ST-99-04977.JPG#/media/File:Soviet\\_MiG-29\\_DF-ST-99-04977.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Soviet_MiG-29_DF-ST-99-04977.JPG#/media/File:Soviet_MiG-29_DF-ST-99-04977.JPG)

## The Savchenko Trial

31 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Despite pledges to observe a ceasefire between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian forces, sporadic fighting continues in SE Ukraine. While much of the heavy weaponry has been pulled back, both sides continue to employ mortar, artillery and small arms fire. Basic questions regarding political control of the separatist regions have yet to be resolved. Separatist leaders demand a high degree of autonomy (or assimilation into Russia), while officials in Kiev insist that these regions remain part of the Ukrainian state. As the politicians hold intermittent talks to resolve these questions, fighting continues on the battlefield, within the media, and, in a couple of celebrated cases, within the courtroom.

The situation surrounding the capture, detention and pending trial of Nadia Savchenko has come to exemplify the murky and complex nature of this conflict. Savchenko, Ukraine's first female helicopter pilot, was captured (some say abducted) in June 2014. The Russians claim that she served as an artillery forward observer, directing fire which killed two Russian journalists on 17 June 2014. According to the Russian rendition, Savchenko then attempted to cross illegally into Russia shortly thereafter and was captured. Not surprisingly, the Ukrainian narrative tells a much different story. According to their account, Savchenko played no role in the death of the Russian journalists, was captured by separatists on 18 June and illegally transferred across the border into Russia a couple of weeks later. Since then, the Ukrainians maintain, she has been held illegally by the Russian authorities.

Since being imprisoned Savchenko's case has become a cause celebre for both sides of the conflict. The media coverage, both traditional and social, has been extensive and incessant. For the Russians, she represents the deadly, Ukrainian zealot who is prepared to murder her Slavic brethren for a nationalist cause. For most Ukrainians, she symbolizes the courage, strength and determination of the new Ukrainian state. She has continued to maintain her innocence, even enduring a prolonged hunger strike to protest against the alleged Russian injustice.

The trial to determine her guilt or innocence has been repeatedly delayed, and the first brief adjacent excerpt from a Ukrainian source describes the latest maneuverings in this complex case. According to this article, Savchenko's trial may be held in the small, provincial city of Donetsk, Russia (not to be confused with the Ukrainian city of Donetsk), located in the southern Rostov Region. *(continued)*

*“The Russian president’s press secretary Dmitriy Peskov has said the Kremlin has no right to put pressure on the investigation or court hearings into the case of Ukrainian pilot Nadiya (Nadezhda) Savchenko.”*



Nadiya Savchenko.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

**Source:** Halya Coynash, “Savchenko Trial: ‘Fort Knox’ Security and 300 Kilometers on the Road,” *Prava Lyudyny v Ukrayini*, 31 July 2015. <http://khpg.org.ua/en/index.php?id=1438288058>

*The long-awaited preliminary hearing in Russia’s trial of Ukrainian MP and former military pilot Nadiya Savchenko in Russian Donetsk on Thursday was adjourned shortly after beginning.*

*In defense lawyer Mark Feygin’s words, the court building in Russian Donetsk “was guarded like Fort Knox” on July 30 for the closed hearing. Savchenko was brought from a remand prison in Novocherkassk 150 kilometers away which would mean three hours minimum a day on the road....*

*Both in that appeal and in her letter to the heads of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [PACE] and UN, Savchenko explained that Russian Donetsk is extremely close to the Donbas border area under the control of the militants. She called the city “the loading point and base supplying the pro-Russian militants fighting in the east of Ukraine and heading there from Russia”. The fact that the area is “effectively in the zone of military action”, she explained, would place her sister, a chief witness, and her elderly mother in direct danger. She herself wrote a will before leaving Moscow, explaining to Zoya Svetova, a human rights activist, that if Russia was prepared to set up this travesty of a trial in a war zone, they were capable of anything....*

*...The journey to Russian Donetsk took a long time with it requiring intervention by Russia’s Human Rights Ombudsperson Alla Pamfilova to even ascertain Savchenko’s whereabouts.*

*It is not clear where she will be held until the decision is formally announced as to where the trial will be held. Or until some other arrangement has been reached. Feygin has repeatedly spoken of negotiations underway for Savchenko’s release as part of an exchange. What grounds he has for such assertions is not known...*

## Continued: The Savchenko Trial

The article suggests that Russian authorities chose this remote location to both limit press coverage and prevent her supporters from attending the trial. According to the article, this city is also used as one of “the loading points and base supplying the pro-Russian militants fighting in the east of Ukraine and heading there from Russia.” Residents likely harbor strong anti-Ukrainian sentiments (in July 2014, the city was allegedly shelled by Ukrainian forces).

The second excerpt (from a Russian source) states the official Kremlin position has been one of total legal objectivity regarding this case. The official spokesperson points out that “the Kremlin has no right to put pressure on the investigation or court hearings into the case of Ukrainian pilot Nadiya (Nadezhda) Savchenko” and “that only a court can decide whether Savchenko was guilty.”

Regardless of the evidence, should the Savchenko case go to trial, she will more than likely be found guilty. Despite claims of legal objectivity, the Kremlin has invested too much of its own credibility to release Savchenko. As the excerpt from the Ukrainian article suggests, once convicted, there may be an opportunity to exchange Savchenko for captured Russian soldiers currently detained in Ukraine.  
**End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

**Source:** “Putin’s Spokesman Denies Kremlin Has Influence on Jailed Ukrainian Pilot’s Case,” *RIA Novosti*, 30 July 2015.

*The Russian president’s press secretary Dmitriy Peskov has said the Kremlin has no right to put pressure on the investigation or court hearings into the case of Ukrainian pilot Nadiya (Nadezhda) Savchenko...*

*“The Kremlin’s position could not change, because this is not about the Kremlin’s position, this is the case when the Kremlin’s position does not matter. An investigation concerning her [Savchenko] is under way, and the investigation accuses her of serious crimes,” Peskov told reporters.*

*He stressed that only a court can decide whether Savchenko was guilty.*

*“And in this case the Kremlin has no right to influence the investigation or, even more so, the court,” Peskov said.*

*Asked about rumored negotiations between the Russian and Ukrainian special services on a possible exchange of Savchenko and two Russians detained in Ukraine, Peskov said: “The only thing that I can confirm is that there will be a trial.”*

*Savchenko was detained in Russia on charges that she was involved in the killing of two Russian journalists in eastern Ukraine in June 2014.*

*On 9 July 2014, the Investigations Committee reported that Savchenko had been detained on Russian territory after crossing the border “without documents under the guise of a refugee.” But Savchenko said that she was kidnapped in Ukraine and taken to Russia by force.*

## Sergey Shoygu:

### Russia’s Defense Minister A Bio-Sketch

By Ray Finch, FMSO

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

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



# Harnessing University Students for Defense

30 June 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** The April 2015 issue of *Voennoye Mysl (Military Thought)* (<http://vm.milportal.ru/>) contains a detailed article on the initial results of establishing “defense research companies” within Russia’s higher education system. The intent of this initiative was to allow select university students to conduct defense-related research while allowing them the opportunity to fulfill their one-year military obligation. This particular article examines survey data from approximately 120 participants involved in a pilot program at the Zhukovsky and Gagarin Air Force Academy in Voronezh.

According to the article, students enrolled in this program rated their overall experience as positive, primarily because it allowed them to continue their research while gaining credit for military service. Additionally, students were impressed with “the everyday conditions of life and work, the competence of research supervisors and the professionalism of other staff members at the military academy.” They were less impressed with the “lack of time for research because of other [military] duties,” to include physical fitness training. They gave strong marks to the potential job opportunities which stemmed from this program. As the excerpt points out, students who distinguished themselves in research were offered contracts with the Ministry of Defense.

As justification for this program, the author quotes Dmitry Rogozin, Vice Premier for Russia’s Military Industrial Commission. Rogozin has pointed out that, given the threats the country faces today, Russia’s military industry cannot merely “copy someone else’s achievements, trying all the time to catch up with them. We should try and cut corners, that is to say, skip the fifth setup and boldly get at the sixth one at once.” Presumably, enlisting university students into the country’s defense industry will allow Russia to make a technological leap into the next generation of weapons. The pilot program of a couple hundred has since expanded to enrolling over 2400 students.

The article concludes on a positive note, pointing out three reasons why conscripting young men into research companies educated at Russia’s leading universities has enormous potential. First, these companies will give an intellectual boost to the Russian military, “strengthening the readiness of the Armed Forces to promptly respond to contemporary military and political challenges.” Second, this project is another indicator that military service “is once again becoming a means of social mobility.” Smart, young Russian men now perceive military service as “a springboard for...subsequent career and success in life.” Finally, “these research companies make a tangible contribution to the development of cutting-edge technologies for creating new weapons and military equipment.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

**Source:** G.V. Zibrov, “Опыт функционирования научных рот в контексте развития гражданско-военных отношений,” [The Role of Research Companies in Furthering Civilian-Military Relations] *Military Thought*, 1 Apr 15 - 30 Jun 15, v2 2015.

*...In 2013, the RF Defense Ministry initiated a project aimed at extra personnel support for the military research complex, i.e. conscription of the better civilian university graduates for service in the posts of research company operators.... The author looks at the outcome of this project on the example of a research company formed at the Military Training and Research Center of the N.Ye. Zhukovsky and Yu.A. Gagarin Air Force Academy in Voronezh....*

*...The research showed that a vast majority of the students value the new version of conscription service primarily for the chance of doing skilled work in their professional area, performing military service duties in sufficient comfort. Every third conscript also finds attractive the opportunity of acquiring research experience and making professional progress, getting access to military research projects and carrying on with military career in an officer position...*

*...D.O. Rogozin, Deputy Chairman of the Military Industrial Commission under the Government of the Russian Federation, points out that it is imperative that we join the group of states with the sixth technological setup within the next decade. What needs to be done, in his view, is this. “It is not enough to follow the classical route, i.e. blindly copy someone else’s achievements, trying all the time to catch up with them. We should try and cut corners, that is to say, skip the fifth setup and boldly get at the sixth one at once.”...*

*...By and large the respondents see various aspects and conditions of service with a research company in a positive light; they are pleased with virtually all the parameters; one can talk only of a greater or lesser degree of satisfaction. The thing that earned the highest praise of the students was the everyday conditions of life and work, the competence of research supervisors and the professionalism of other staff members at the military academy... Among the shortcomings in the research work organization students name lack of time for research because of other duties, even though they spend most of the time on research and self-education.... Upon discharge the students who distinguished themselves in research were offered contracts with the Ministry of Defense.... The survey showed that conscripting into research companies young men educated at Russia’s leading universities has enormous potential.*

*First, research companies help speedily prepare for military service young men with the kind of knowledge and skills that are in short supply in the army and are very much in demand during technologically complex modern armed conflicts....*

*... Second, the Russian Army, having ridden out the crisis, is once again becoming a means of social mobility. The desire of successful young people to serve by conscription with research companies, and then continue service under contract points to the reemerging prestige and trust in the Armed Forces, their ability to provide conditions for self-fulfillment and worthy pay for the work of military experts....*

*...Third, research companies make a tangible contribution to the development of cutting-edge technologies for creating new weapons and military equipment...*

## Arctic Forces Are Busy, Busy, Busy

27 July 2015

### OE Watch Commentary:

These remarks of the Northern Sea Fleet Commander's meeting with journalists were released in conjunction with Russian Navy Day. The Northern Sea Fleet is Russia's most important fleet, as it is also the Northern Fleet-Operational-Strategic Command (SF-OSK) with the status of a military district, i.e., it is a four-star command. There are four military districts (East, Central, South and West), all of which carry the designation of an operational-strategic command (OSK). Although the Northern Fleet Arctic Command is not called a military district, it is an OSK, emphasizing the preeminence of the Arctic in current Russian thinking. The Northern Fleet has Russia's only aircraft carrier and receives the newest strategic missile and attack submarines. It also has a large component of air defense, aviation and ground forces.

The big news in the admiral's remarks is the location of the summer joint exercise- the Norilsk area. Norilsk is a mining center where nickel, copper, cobalt, arsenic, cadmium, lead, platinum, palladium, selenium, coal and zinc are mined. This city of 130,000 is located inland, more than 100 kilometers from the port of Dudinka, which is on the north-flowing Yenisei River.

Norilsk transports its ore by train to Dudinka, then by ship to Murmansk and then by rail to its destinations. It was once a center of convict labor and supposedly the graveyard of over 16,000 of them. It is one of the most polluted places on the planet and of major importance to Russia. Since 2001 it has been closed to all non-Russians, with the exception of citizens of Belarus. The exercise area is approximately midway along the Russian Arctic coast and remote from major supporting

(continued)

*“The deployment of military infrastructure in the Arctic is among the Russian Northern Fleet's priority tasks, and it is currently setting up an advanced reconnaissance system in the area. We are setting up a most sophisticated and diversified situation monitoring system in the Arctic zone now. This objective has been partially achieved, and various components of this system are now monitoring the aerial and surface situation in real time.”*

— Russian Northern Fleet Commander,  
Admiral. Vladimir Korolyov

Source: Moscow Interfax, <http://www.interfax.com>, 27 July 2015

*In a meeting with journalists, Korolyov stated “Administrative and housing complexes are being built where our units are stationed so that our servicemen permanently stationed on the Arctic islands have comfortable service conditions meeting modern requirements and standards.” The construction of the Northern Clover self-contained administrative and housing complex on the Kotelny Island should be completed this year. “This is one of the most advanced administrative and housing complexes in our armed forces today. Our servicemen have lived in it for several months to test all of its capabilities.”*

*The complex includes all the requisites for personal comfort, i.e. modular living premises, showers, recreation areas, auditoriums, mess halls, a summer garden, a club, a steam bath, a gym, and other facilities. The complex's infrastructure also includes water-purification and drainage systems, a diesel power station and a transformer substation, garages, hangars, fuel and lubricants storage facilities, a filling station, and automobile storage units. The construction of a similar complex has been started on the Alexandra Land Island, which is part of the Franz Joseph Land archipelago. “In terms of the amount of work done, we are nearing the 50% level of its readiness.”*

*In the community of Rogachyovo on Novaya Zemlya archipelago, “we are nearing the completion of the construction and expect to have the facility operational in the near future.”*

*“We have started delivering cargo and stock-piling construction materials to fully prepare for the construction of facilities on Sredny Island in the Severnaya Zemlya (Northern Land) archipelago.”*

*The Northern Fleet is actively engaged in combat training in the Arctic. “We have prepared the state-of-the-art strategic missile launcher submarines Yury Dolgoruky, Alexander Nevsky, and Vladimir Monomakh to perform their duties in the Arctic seas. The Northern Fleet's anti-submarine aircraft patrol the Arctic Ocean regularly. Our naval combat and support ships conduct annual Arctic missions. However, we concentrate above all on training shore-based forces to serve under Arctic conditions.”*

*“Last year, we conducted an integrated tactical exercise of shore-based forces to defend Russia's Arctic island zone and marine coast in coordination with surface forces. This included air defense and missile firing practice. We used the Pantsir-S1 surface-to-air missile and anti-aircraft artillery system for the first time during these exercises.”*

*“We have practiced landing amphibious assault forces from large landing ships onto the unimproved shores of Arctic islands, and plan to conduct similar training exercises on the New Siberian Islands archipelago within the next few months.”*

*“However, the most exciting and intense event of the combat training program this year will be a multiservice exercise to defend strategically important economic sites. This is our first time conducting such an exercise. It will involve amphibious assault forces and units from the Arctic motorized infantry brigade. During this exercise, our Arctic units will interact with the Airborne Forces and special units.”*

*“We plan to conduct this exercise near Norilsk, which is a new theater for us” Admiral Korolyov said. “We will attach particular emphasis during the exercises on training the personnel of Arctic units to serve on unfamiliar terrain and to testing new types of military hardware, such as all-terrain vehicles and articulated, tracked, cross-country vehicles, under Arctic conditions. We will simulate various crisis situations related to defending a strategically-important economic facility from various threats, including terrorist ones, during the exercises.”*

(continued)

## Continued: Arctic Forces Are Busy, Busy, Busy

facilities. The exercise will truly test joint command and control, logistics support and combat integration.

The exercise will include Arctic-based forces of the 200th Arctic Motorized Rifle Brigade from Pechenga and the 61st Naval Infantry Brigade from Murmansk. The 98th Guards Airborne Division from St. Petersburg, which has been quite active in the Arctic over the past two years, will also play a major role. The 80th Arctic Motorized Rifle Brigade, which was established in January 2015, will apparently sit this one out. Apparently it has not reached the desired level of training, equipment fill or personnel fill. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

*The Northern Fleet's shore-based component has significantly grown over the past half a year and it has functioned as part of a multi-service strategic force. "A newly-formed Arctic motorized infantry brigade has joined the shore component, and we have also transformed a marine regiment into a brigade,"*

*"The fleet's capabilities to perform air defense tasks have also been significantly upgraded. An [S-400 Triumph/SA-21 GROWLER] air defense division and a composite air regiment [probably SU-30 FLANKER-C, SU-35 FLANKER-E and MIG-31 FOXHOUND] have joined the fleet. However, this all is only the beginning of significant structural transformations being carried out within the Northern Fleet in view of expanding its duties related to the protection of the Russian Federation's interests in the Arctic. We have started to work on setting up an air and air defense army within the Northern Fleet's composition. Simultaneously, we are working to improve command of the shore forces and step up their capabilities. Finally, it must be noted that, by commissioning the state-of-the-art nuclear submarines, I mean the subs of the Borei and Yasen projects, and by expanding the inventory and logistics basis, we have multiplied the Northern Fleet's combat potential."*



# The Orange Blossom Special on Steroids

6 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Movie buffs are familiar with Russian combat trains from Strelnikov's train "the Rosa Luxembourg" in "Dr. Zhivago" (1965), the Agitprop train in "Reds" (1981) or the armored behemoth in "GoldenEye" (1995). But surely these zephyrs do not exist outside of museums? Actually they do, and have survived another attempt to send them to the scrap yard.

Armored trains have a long tradition in Soviet and Russian history, as well as cinematography. They were crucial in fighting in the deserts of the south and the tundra of the far east during the Russian Civil War, played a significant role in World War II and were even used in the fighting in Chechnya. Military trains have provided a mobile platform for air defense, artillery, command and control, and logistics, and even as nuclear weapons launchers. Russia lacks the road network of the United States, and the majority of bulk materials move by barge and rail. How does a country protect its rail network, particularly since it is a vital part of the national transport system? Perhaps there is still a place for a lethal locomotive and a killer caboose. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

*“Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu has decided to reverse a directive of his predecessor Anatoliy Serdyukov on the elimination of four special armored trains in service with the army. The defense department maintains that the trains’ crews are ready at any moment to perform assignments given them by the command. During the counterterrorist operation in the North Caucasus from 2002 through 2009 the military created a whole force of armored trains, which were assigned to the Railroad Troops.”*

**Source:** *Izvestiya Online*, <http://www.izvestia.ru/>, 6 August 2015

## **Armored Trains are back on Watch**

*Izvestiya is informed that the decision to keep the specialized armored trains as part of the Defense Ministry Railroad Troops was personally made by Sergey Shoygu, head of the Defense department, personally.*

*“Owing to the unexpected resignation of Anatoliy Serdyukov at the end of 2012, many of his orders on the reorganization of various subdivisions of the Defense Ministry were not executed.” The new team of managers who came to the defense department together with Sergey Shoygu needed time to understand the “business” which they had inherited. Following the completion of an audit, Sergey Shoygu canceled the directive of his predecessor on a reduction in military educational institutions and mobile VDV [Airborne Troops] elements and the inactivation of the force of armored trains in the Southern Military District.*

*“When he was head of the Ministry of Emergencies, Shoygu, in Chechnya during the counterterrorist operation, saw these special trains in operation and deemed it expedient to keep them as part of the Armed Forces.” The officers emphasize that the special trains gave a splendid account of themselves when the security of trains with construction and military freight and personnel was required. In addition, the armored trains were irreplaceable for the cover of the combat engineers, who cleared mines from the railroad bed. When the demolition specialists found a landmine beneath the rails, they detonated it, at a safe distance from the train and replaced the damaged section with a new section. In each train there was a repair team, whose men could restore sections of damaged track in a matter of hours.*

*“Mobile and well-armed armored trains will, possibly, in the future also prove useful for accomplishing special assignments.” There are currently four modern special trains in formations of the Railroad Troops in the Southern Military District: the Baykal, Terek, Amur, and Don. They were built at the start of the 2000s from several armored trains built back in the middle of the last century. Up to the 1980s, these trains served in the Far East, where they guarded bridges and railroad sections on the Soviet-Chinese border.*

*The new special trains have armored cars with turrets holding an automatic grenade launcher and a large-caliber machinegun. These turrets may be replaced with more-powerful arms, from a long-range artillery piece to a multiple-launch rocket system. The trains’ armored turret protects its soldiers from 30-millimeter shells and rounds from assault rifles and machineguns. In the center of the train, between the engine and the armored car, is a flat car with a tank on it. The tank can deliver fire to its flanks and overhead. The train also has a special car which houses equipment capable of transmitting a most powerful electronic signal for blocking the detonation of a remote-controlled bomb planted on the railroad track.*

*Military expert Viktor Litovkin believes that it is as yet too soon to be putting the armored train in the siding. “Of course, during a modern war with NATO forces an armored train would have no defensive or offensive function. But during local conflicts armored trains are irreplaceable,”*

*He further states that the armored train is ideally suited to the elimination of terrorist groups which operate in the areas of railroad tracks, for the evacuation of the wounded, and for mine-clearing operations. Moreover, Litovkin notes, modern offensive arms -- the long-range Msta howitzer or the Tornado multiple-launch rocket system -- may be deployed on the special train.*

*But Ivan Konovalov, director of the Center for Strategic Trends, maintains that the existence in the modern army of military equipment of the times of WWI is not justified. “In the 21st century the armored train is a vestige of the past, which in a modern war is useless.”*

## Expanding Russian Maritime Ability

27 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Russia announced its updated maritime doctrine and in conjunction with Russian Navy Day (26 July). In the revised doctrine, the Atlantic Ocean is given priority in order to match NATO activities and expansion. The Arctic is given priority to maintain the Northern Sea Route [Northeast Passage]. As part of this Arctic effort, Russia is building three new heavy-duty nuclear-powered icebreakers. It already has 37 icebreakers, 6 of which are heavy-duty nuclear icebreakers. Canada is a distant second with six, all of which are less efficient diesel-powered vessels and not heavy-duty. The Arktika and Sibir icebreaker projects have been known for years, but the Ural is a recent addition.

Many Western sources, when reporting this story, have mistranslated maritime as naval. The Russian Navy subscribes to Russian military doctrine, which has a naval component. There is no strictly Russian naval doctrine. The navy also is a member of the Russian maritime community (science, merchant marine, fishing fleet, coast guard, maritime police, resource extraction and support activities) and, as such, is also covered by maritime doctrine. When the translation is given as naval, it has the Russian Navy moving commercial cargo, conducting oceanography, extracting underwater oil and conducting combat patrols in Antarctic waters. Russian icebreakers still belong to the Coast Guard, not the Navy. The merchant fleet still moves commercial cargo.

The maritime doctrine talks about developing maritime infrastructure at its Crimean port of Sevastopol and restoring Russian presence in the Mediterranean Sea. This is certainly tied to the first joint Chinese-Russian Mediterranean naval exercise conducted in May. The Soviet and Russian Navy has always been more of a coastal defense navy rather than a true blue-water navy.

Of interest is the addition of the Antarctic seas to the regional areas of Russian maritime activities. The Russian maritime scientific and commercial community has been active in Antarctic waters since the 1950s. The Russian research ships Akademik Shokolskiy and Akademik Fyodorov are regular visitors to Antarctic waters and normally spend 180 days on station at a time. The Akademik Shokolskiy gained some notoriety in December 2014 when it was trapped in Antarctic ice and Australian, Chinese and French icebreakers were unable to free it. Russian research ships—and some of their icebreakers—take on paying passengers for Arctic or Antarctic cruises. Russian science and the Coast Guard try to pay their own way. Fifty-tourists were evacuated by Chinese helicopters from the iced-in Akademik Shokolskiy. It will be interesting to observe what additional plans Russian maritime entities may have for Antarctic waters. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

**Source:** Moscow *Interfax*, <http://www.interfax.com/>, 27 July 2015

### ***Russia's maritime doctrine emphasis Atlantic, Arctic areas - Rogozin***

*According to Rogozin, the new document covers four functional and six regional areas of Russia's naval activities. "The four functional areas are: naval operations, maritime transport, maritime science, and the exploration and production of fossil fuels in the open ocean and the coastal zone. "The six regional areas are: the Atlantic, the Arctic, the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, the Caspian Sea, and - a new addition - Antarctica."*

*Russia approved its maritime doctrine in 2011 and this is its new version. According to Rogozin "The reasons for approving the new doctrine are found in the changes in the international political situation and in the objective consolidation of Russia as a great maritime power."*

*Rogozin also discussed why the main emphasis is precisely on the Atlantic and the Arctic. "The Atlantic is due to our attention to NATO expansion eastward and the creation of NATO infrastructure close to our borders," He also stated that these changes were due to the re-unification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia and the need to swiftly integrate them into Russia's economy and restore Russian presence in the Mediterranean Sea.*

*"The increased attention towards to the Arctic is also due to a number of factors, primarily, the growing importance of the Northern Sea Route, which requires Russia to re-create its nuclear-powered icebreaking fleet. The president has already been informed that efforts have begun to build heavy-duty nuclear icebreakers," These icebreakers will be named Arktika, Sibir and Ural, and will be commissioned in 2017, 2019 and 2020, respectively.*

*In addition, the Arctic is relevant because of the need to revive towns and ports to ensure the functioning of the Northern Sea Route. Rogozin stated that the new version of Russian maritime doctrine pays much more attention to the environmental aspects of the Arctic activities.*

*Further, the Arctic is a priority because it gives Russia freedom of access to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.*

**Source:** Tamara Zaiatina, *TASS* 27 July 2015, <http://tass.ru/en/opinions/810989>, 27 July 2015

### ***Revised Doctrine Asserts Russia's Status of Maritime Power***

*The leading research fellow at the Centre for Military and Political Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences's Institute of US and Canada Studies, Yuri Morozov, believes that the maritime doctrine puts such a major emphasis on the Arctic because, as the ice cap melts, the importance of the Northern Sea Route grows. "This is precisely the reason why Russia is stepping up efforts to build its own icebreaker fleet capable of escorting sea convoys along Russia's coast. Besides, the Arctic gives Russia unlimited access to the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. And the huge hydrocarbon resources make the Arctic an area of tough competition among the countries eager to develop them."*

*The president of the International Centre for Geopolitical Analysis, Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov, retired, agrees. "The struggle for Arctic resources is bound to expand over years to come. The United States has launched a major program for armaments in the Arctic, split the region into zones of responsibility among its allies and is in fact creating NATO's Arctic twin. In the meantime, Russia in the 1980s and 1990s quit the Arctic. There was no radar coverage at all. In the meantime, the North Atlantic Alliance was systematically building up its presence in the Arctic and holding daily military exercises. Moreover, the United States and some of its allies refuse to recognize some Arctic areas, such as that of the Mendeleev and Lomonosov ridges belong to Russia. Therefore, the status of the Arctic as a priority guideline of Russia's maritime doctrine looks quite reasonable."*

*"In the Mediterranean Russia uses some strategically important shipping routes. It is beyond doubt it should maintain and develop relations with such friendly countries as Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Yemen in order to enhance naval presence in the Middle East and in Central Asia," Ivashov believes.*

## Russia Plans to Double Forces on Novaya Zemlya Archipelago by 2020

9 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Novaya Zemlya is a large Arctic archipelago located north of the mainland of Russian Europe. It is an extension of the Ural Mountains. It has been known since the 11th Century and became the subject of Dutch, Russian and Norwegian exploration beginning in the 16th Century. Claimed by Russia, its population was always small, limited to indigenous people (the Nenets) and some Russian settlers.

This all changed in 1957 when the island was depopulated and it became a Soviet nuclear test range, where 224 atmospheric and subsurface nuclear detonations were conducted. The last detonation occurred in 1990. Many areas of the archipelago are contaminated, not only by the nuclear detonations but also from the systematic dumping of nuclear and toxic waste there for over four decades. Today there are some 2,000 inhabitants on Novaya Zemlya. The population is set to grow, since the Russian government intends to expand it with an air defense regiment and heavy-duty military airfield.

In 2008 Russia released a movie entitled Novaya Zemlya. The gist of the movie was that in the near future, in order to deal with overcrowded prisons and the abolition of the death penalty, the worst violators would be sent as colonizers to the archipelago. The first shipment of Russian and Chechen lifers are off-loaded with no guards or administrators and three months of food. The prisoners are left to organize themselves. Mass carnage ensues as the Russians and Chechens kill one another until a convict gang takes charge and creates an adult version of "Lord of the Flies." Somehow, Novaya Zemlya does not sound like a great duty station for the air defense regiment or airfield personnel. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

*“Russia intends to double its force contingent at the Armed Forces Central Range on the island of Novaya Zemlya in the Arctic”*

**Source:** Deyta New Agency (Vladivostok Russian Far East) *Deyta.Ru*, <http://www.deita.ru>, 9 July 2015

*Deyta News Agency, citing Russian Information Agency Novosti, states that the troop increase will be completed by 2020.*

*“A buildup of the Arctic force grouping and its provision with the most advanced weapons is taking place today at the Russian Federation’s Central Range (on the island of Novaya Zemlya). Our plans are that the force grouping at the range will have been doubled by 2020,” a source in the country’s Defense Ministry told Novosti.*

*Provisions have been made on Novaya Zemlya at this time for the fielding of an air defense missile regiment, and the airfield is being reconstructed to enhance their possible use by transport and combat aviation. The MOD spokesman stated that the air defense missile regiment will be “a most important strategic project of the Defense Ministry on Novaya Zemlya.”*

*Deyta News Agency notes that Russia has been actively reclaiming its northern territories in recent years. A whole set of measures, including a strengthening of the military presence, has been devised for the defense of Russian interests in the Arctic.*

*Valentina Matviyenko, chairman of the Federation Council, said earlier that Russia should restore its lead role in the development of the Arctic at a new level. She observed that the country will be able to reliably defend its national interests in the Arctic only by the accelerated reclamation of its northern territories.*



Source: "Blankmap-ao-090N-north pole". Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blankmap-ao-090N-north\\_pole.png#/media/File:Blankmap-ao-090N-north\\_pole.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blankmap-ao-090N-north_pole.png#/media/File:Blankmap-ao-090N-north_pole.png)

## Russia's Non-Militarization/Militarization of the Arctic

10 August 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Russia continues to state that it is not involved with the militarization of the Arctic. Critics find this assertion hard to believe, since an infrastructure has been constructed in the Arctic, there is work on preparing the Arctic “in the operational sense,” the combat potential of the Northern Fleet has been focused there, logistics capabilities have been expanded, nuclear submarines are patrolling the waters, and the area is under UAV monitoring. Other reports note that the Pantsir anti-aircraft missile system is on islands in the Arctic Ocean, new radar stations are being deployed there, 14 airfields are being rebuilt, and fighter aircraft are continually being redeployed there. All of these issues are stated directly in the Russian press.

This buildup results in Russia playing an interesting word game in relation to its military development of the Arctic. For example, in March 2015 Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin noted, “Militarization of the Arctic is not our task.” A month later, Ambassador-at-large of the Russian Foreign Ministry and senior official at the Arctic Council Vladimir Barbin noted, “All of Russia’s military activities in the Arctic are utterly open, there is no question of any militarization in the area.” In August Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu noted, “Today, hardly anyone is capable of maintaining construction on such a large scale like the one we have in the Arctic...” When Shoygu’s comments are pieced together with the massive influx of military equipment and troops to the Arctic that OE Watch has documented over the past six months, it is hard to believe that the Arctic is not fully militarized already at this point.

The most important organizational change supporting this contention is, of course, the 2014 Russian decision to take the Northern Fleet out of the Western Military District and order its commander to take charge of the Northern Fleet-Combined Strategic Command, whose mission is to defend Russian interests along the Northern Sea Route, protect fishing resources, deposits, and hydrocarbons, and, most important of all, ensure the security in the north of the country. Shoygu has stated, “This situation encourages Russia to protect government interests there with the means of warfare.” The Soviet Military Encyclopedia (no access to a Russian military encyclopedia was available) defines militarization as the “subordination of sociopolitical affairs, the economy, and ideology to the interests of preparing for aggressive wars.” As Russia’s leadership continues to state that the military is just protecting national security in the face of this expansive military buildup, it becomes increasingly hard to believe Russia’s spokesmen on this issue. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

*“Today everybody can see, can feel, and understand that we are all celebrating the return of our Russia to the Arctic Zone, and particularly the islands in the Arctic Ocean.”*

**Source:** Moscow Interfax (in English), 10 August 2015

*Construction rates in the Arctic zone of Russia—both on islands and on the continental coast—reached some unprecedented highs, Russian Defense Minister General Sergey Shoygu said on Friday...Shoygu also paid tribute to the port facilities built on the Kamchatka and on the Black Sea coast. “It is all that is associated with the Northern Fleet, with the Pacific; all that is for acceptance and implementation of infrastructure projects in terms of new military equipment, new submarine ships, surface ships, and maintenance ships that are admitted to our fleet today,” the minister said.*

## Russian Author Questions Ethics of “Killer Robots”

30 July 2015

**OE Watch Commentary:** Some in Russia believe tomorrow’s wars will be fought without human participation. To prepare for that eventuality, Russia is working hard to prepare selected robotic equipment to conduct reconnaissance on land and in water, to fight fires, to conduct rescue missions, to fight in cities and the countryside, and to evacuate wounded soldiers from the battlefield. As thinking moves forward on robotics, ethical issues come to the forefront. The article under consideration here discusses that fact and tries to explain the conundrum of responsibility for future battlefield deaths involving the use of robotic soldiers. **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

*“The use of robots in military actions removes psychological barriers and reduces the political costs which today hinder a decision to start a war: it is easier morally and politically to send killer robots to another country than one’s own citizens.”*

**Source:** Nikolay Epple, “Killer Robots,” *Vedomosti Online*, 30 July 2015.

*A letter of appeal not to allow the development of “killer robots” signed among others by the entrepreneur Elon Musk, physicist Stephen Hawking, and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, was posted on the website of the Future Life Institute on Monday [27 July]. According to the authors, the development of artificial intelligence is possible in just a few years. Its use by the military will mean a third revolution in warfare methods, after the invention of firearms and the atomic bomb.*

*Autonomous weapons systems are impervious to human error, say their defenders. Robots are capable of more accurate and complete processing of data necessary for decision-making and, being programmed, to follow the rules of war, unlike human beings, and observe them undeviatingly.*

*But the main question, as Australian philosopher Robert Sparrow, one of the most authoritative experts in this field, shows in his works is the issue of liability. If the decision to murder a person is taken not by a man but by a machine that does not end up as murder from the morality standpoint, but only further fragments and mediates the responsibility for it.*

*The desire to escape responsibility for the murder of one’s own kind is one of the oldest human aspirations. Examples of mediation include warfare, when a soldier carries out orders from the commander. But the removal of the psychological barrier and the technological process of simplification always turns into just more blood.*

*Maybe the awareness of inevitable responsibility will make it possible to learn the lessons of previous technological revolutions. Although that hope, to put it bluntly, looks illusory.*