

OE WATCH

FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Special Essay:

Africa: Iran's Final Frontier?

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Iran Launches Indigenous Ocean-Going Tanker

24 February 2013

“Iranian shipping remains largely under the aegis of Khatam al-Anbia, the economic and commercial wing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.”



Iranian tanker, via Photo: Ebrahim Noroozi, via FARS News Agency

OE Watch Commentary: Iranian officials regularly announce alleged breakthroughs in their own domestic armament industry. In recent months, for example, they have announced new drones,¹ aircraft,² anti-aircraft missiles,³ and submarines,⁴ and have even promised to build an aircraft carrier.⁵ Except for the aircraft carrier and perhaps the fighter jet,⁶ there is usually some kernel of truth to the Iranian claims, although they are seldom as advanced as Iranian officials might claim.

While such claims grab headlines, the announcement of a more modest achievement—launching a new line of indigenous tanker—should register on the radar screens of Western policymakers and security officials for a number of reasons. Press reports describe the 178-meter-long, 32-meter-wide tanker as weighing 35,000 tons, with a five-story, 400-ton superstructure. Its engines reportedly have a propulsion power of 11,200 KW, making it bigger than the Aframax-class tankers which Iranian shipbuilders have constructed for Venezuela.⁷

Both the United States and the European Union have already slapped unilateral sanctions upon the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) in order to leverage pressure upon Iran's oil exports into Iranian concessions on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.⁸ Because sanctioning the NITC might hamper the company from purchasing new tankers, the Iranian government will likely claim as a victory the ability to build their own.

Source: “Beh Ab Andazi Nokhstin Koshti Faravadeh Barsakht Dakhel Dar Esfand” (“Launch of the First Indigenously-Built Tanker in February”), Tinn.ir [Transportation Industry News Network], 24 February 2013. <http://www.tinn.ir/vdcdx50fxyt0xx6.2a2y.html>

Launch of the First Indigenously-Built Tanker in February

According to officials from ISOICO [Iran Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex Company], the first domestically-constructed tanker was supposed to launch during the president's recent visit to Hormuzigan but instead launched in the presence of the first vice-president. Hamid Rezaian, managing director of ISOICO, said...the contract for two ships was valued at \$25 million and was signed on January 2, 2003 between ISOICO and NITC [National Iranian Tanker Company].

Continued: Iran Launches Indigenous Ocean-Going Tanker

The European Union's ban on reflagging Iranian tankers to third countries—a strategy Iran has used to skirt sanctions⁹—may mean the Iranian government has switched tactics and now seeks to control all aspects of the oil industry, from drilling to delivery.

*A larger issue for American and European policymakers may be the security challenge that Iranian-built, Iranian-operated tankers may pose to international shipping and port security. Iranian shipping remains largely under the aegis of Khatam al-Anbia, the economic and commercial wing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iranian authorities have made clear that they recognize that they cannot defeat the United States head-on, and will therefore consider asymmetric naval strategies. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

1. “Pehpadha-ye razme Iran be moshak-e mohjehaz mishavand (Iran’s Combat UAVs equipped with missiles),” Fars News Agency, 2 September 2012, <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13910612000367/>
2. “Iran President Unveils Qaher-313 Indigenous Fighter Jet,” Press TV, 2 February 2013, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/02/02/286841/iran-unveils-new-indigenous-fighter-jet/>
3. “Tawsehah Rahbari Bar Tahrek Pezir-e Sahmaneh-e Mushaki S-200” (“Recommendations of the Leader Regarding the Mobility of the S-200 Missile System”),” Tabnak.ir, 1 January 2013.
4. “Alhaq-e Shanavarha-ye Setahe va Zirsetahe Jadid beh Niru-ye Darya-ye Artesh,” [“Incorporation of new Navy surface and subsurface vessels into the Navy,”] Fars News Agency, 27 November 2012, <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13910908000130>
5. “Sakht-e Naw Havapeymabar dar Niru-ye Daraya-ye Iran,” [“Iran Navy to Build Aircraft Carriers,”] Asr-e Iran, 29 September 2011. <http://www.asriran.com>
6. Robert Johnson and David Cenciotti, “10 Reasons Iran’s New Jet Will Never Leave the Ground,” Business Insider, 4 February 2013, <http://www.businessinsider.com/irans-new-qaher-313-new-stealth-jet-cant-fly-2013-2?op=1>
7. “Iran launches indigenous ocean-going tanker ship,” Press TV, 24 February 2013, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/02/24/290608/iran-launches-oceangoing-tanker/>
8. “United States Increases Sanctions Against The Government Of Iran And Its Proliferation Networks,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, 12 July 2012, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1634.aspx>; Justyna Pawlak, “EU sanctions target Iran oil, gas, tanker companies,” Reuters, 16 October 2012.
9. Mkinga Mkinga, “Tanzania Denies Registering Iranian Tankers,” Africa Review (Nairobi), 6 December 2012, <http://www.africareview.com/News/Tanzania-denies-registering-Iranian-tankers/-/979180/1638038/-/7e5qjz/-/index.html> ; Benoît Faucon, “West Seeks to Plug Loopholes in Iran Shipping Sanctions,” Wall Street Journal, October 15, 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443675404578057860497278752.html>
10. See “Iran Marine Industrial Company” in “Designated IRGC Affiliates and Designated Iran-Linked Financial Institutions,” U.S. Department of Treasury, 24 September 2012, http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/irgc_ifsr.pdf
11. See, for example, Fariborz Haghshenass, Iran’s Doctrine of Asymmetric Naval Warfare. Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 2008. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus87.pdf>

Iranian Navy Enters Pacific

25 February 2013

“This is the first time that we have passed the Strait of Malacca and entered the Pacific Ocean.”

OE Watch Commentary: Both an Iranian warship's passage through the Suez Canal and into the Mediterranean on 22 February 2011 and Iranian warships paying port calls in the Sudan a year later have reinforced the fact that the Iranian Navy has expanded its operational reach. The push into the Pacific comes less than three months after Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei declared that the Iranian Navy's new emphasis should be expanding its reach beyond the Persian Gulf.

The Iranian flotilla, comprising a destroyer and a helicopter carrier, may symbolically demonstrate Iran's naval resurgence, but logistical constraints—fueling and resupply—should keep the Iranian vessels close to shore. As such, however, Tehran's dispatch of its navy into the Pacific might be considered a diplomatic shot across the bow. Beyond pulling into Zhangjiagang, a port just north of Shanghai, the flotilla is also expected to pay a port call in Sri Lanka on its way home.

Whether or not the Iranian vessels are resupplied at sea might shed light on Iran's logistical capabilities, and where else Iranian military vessels pull into port—perhaps in Pakistan and Burma (Myanmar)—might also shed light on Iranian efforts to develop military ties with Asia. The implication of any Iranian military vessels continuing on to North Korea is alarming. While Tehran and Pyongyang cooperate commercially and, according to Western press reports, in the covert exchange of nuclear technology as well, overt military cooperation would suggest confidence and augmentation of ties which might challenge the West.

As a side note, Sayyari is wrong to suggest that an Iranian navy has never passed the Strait of Malacca, between Malaysia and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. During the Tang Dynasty in the 8th century, Muslim pirates consisting of both Arabs and Persians (the Chinese at the time seldom differentiated) burned Canton (modern Guangzhou) to the ground, a fact about which Persian nationalists might remember, but Iranian authorities most likely will not trumpet during this voyage. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Source: “Navhaye Artesh Farda Varud Aqiyanus-e Aram Meshavand” (“Tomorrow Navy Ships Will Enter Pacific”), Fars News Agency, 25 February 2013. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13911207000046>

Tomorrow Navy Ships Will Enter Pacific

According to Fars News Agency, Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari announced at a press conference the presence of the Navy's 24th flotilla in the Pacific... Sayyari emphasized, “This is the first time that we have passed the Strait of Malacca and entered the Pacific Ocean,” and added that the warships would pay a port call at Zhangjiagang, China.

1. “Didar Farmandahan-e Niru-ye Darya-ye Artesh bah Farmandeh Kal Qava,” [“Navy Commanders Meet with the Commander in Chief,”] Ayatollah Khamenei Official Website, November 27, 2012. <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/news-content?id=21642>
2. “Iranian Warships to Dock in Colombo,” Fars News Agency, 25 February 2013, <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107147476>

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Iran Unveils Kamikaze Drones

31 January 2013

“Packed with explosives, Iranian suicide drones could wreak havoc with naval vessels and international shipping.”

OE Watch Commentary: *With a population nearing 75 million, Iran is one of the most populous countries in the Middle East. The Islamic Republic has long sought to leverage its comparatively large population in the regime’s defense. During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), for example, Iranian authorities would send unarmed and barefoot 14- and 15-year-old members of the paramilitary Basij across minefields to clear them, with only the promise of paradise to motivate them.*

As the 1988 Operation Praying Mantis demonstrated, the Iranian military has difficulty confronting U.S. forces head on and its navy has since developed swarming techniques. This is meant to exploit American vulnerabilities and cause enough casualties to force American officials to shy away from a prolonged fight.¹ This includes suicide attacks. The problem with suicide attacks, of course, is finding enough cadres willing to commit suicide. Not only does age tempers revolutionary ideology but demography also affects the availability of volunteers. Because the birthrate in Iran is only half of what it was during the Iran-Iraq War, the Iranian government recognizes that it cannot assume an endless supply of young men willing to take their own lives in pursuit of religious or revolutionary ideals.

It is against this backdrop that the excerpted news account should interest Western security officials. The Iranian government has made no secret of its desire to develop a greater drone capability. While Iranian claims to have reverse-engineered a captured American drone appear exaggerated,² there is little doubt that the Iranian military has developed drones and put them into operation. The Islamic Republic already uses drones for surveillance, and has previously claimed to have armed them with small missiles.³ Suicide drones, however, do not require the same technical expertise as the well-armed predators that Iran has previously claimed to have developed. Packed with explosives, Iranian suicide drones could wreak havoc with naval vessels and international shipping in the Persian Gulf. Iranian attempts to make good on threats to close the Strait of Hormuz, for example, might involve kamikaze drones rather than mines.



The Beirut Barracks Bombing (October 23, 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon), via <http://wikipedia.org>

Source: *“Amaliyat-e Mowafeq Pehpadha-ye Enthari Sepha ” (“Successful Operation of Suicide UAV Corps ”),” Fars News Agency, 23 February 2013. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13911205000922>*

Successful Operation of Suicide UAV Corps

According to Gen. Hamid Sarkhaili, the head of public relations for the Great Prophet-8 exercise, a whole spectrum of professional units participated in the exercise, including all unit types ranging from professional armor, artillery, commando and special battalions... The Spokesman for the Great Prophet-8 exercise said, with reference to the destruction of enemy UAVs, that reconnaissance UAVs and suicide UAVs with the capability to attack the enemy were utilized and are operational...

Continued: Iran Unveils Kamikaze Drones

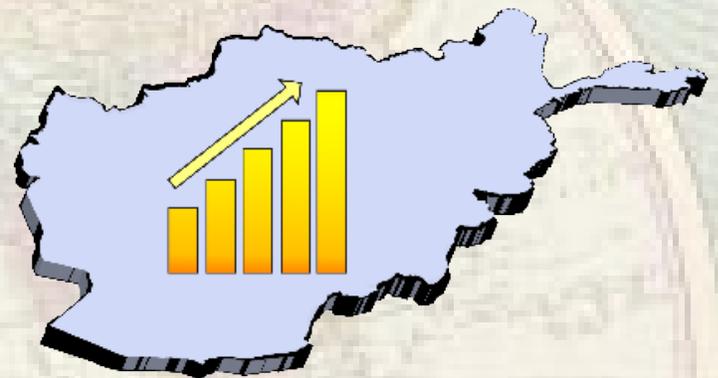
*Even absent explosives, an Iranian willingness to collide drones with helicopters and jetfighters could hamper routine naval and army aviation along the borders of Iran. If the Iranian embrace of suicide drones is serious and if the Iranians master the technology, Iranian strategists might have just opened a new chapter in their asymmetric military strategy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

1. Qur. 2:154; Haim Malka "Must Innocents Die? The Islamic Debate Over Suicide Attacks," Middle East Quarterly, Spring 2003.
2. See, for example, "Darmandagi Doshman az Ashraf-e Ettela'ati Bala-ye Sepah," ("The Enemy is Distressed Because of the Information Dominance of the IRGC,") Javan Online, 15 August 2011, <http://www.javanonline.ir/vdce4q0p2bq048.ala2.html>
3. "Pehpadha-ye Razme Iran be Moshak-e Mohjehaz Mishavand (Iran's Combat UAVs equipped with missiles)," Fars News Agency, 2 September 2012; <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13910612000367/>

Measuring Progress in Reconstructing Afghanistan

By Christiaan Davids,
Sebastian
Rietjens
& Joseph Soeters

Netherlands National Defence Academy



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

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

Lumbering Toward Dialogue in Yemen

12 March 2013

“With the national dialogue set to begin exactly two years after his defection brought down the Saleh regime, General Ali Muhsin finds himself in a position of strength...Ali Abdullah Saleh, meanwhile, has seen better days.”

OE Watch Commentary: After several postponements, Yemen's National Dialogue is finally to begin on 18 March. Preparations for the six-month affair are in full force, and the simple fact of getting so many groups to the bargaining table is a remarkable achievement. As to what the negotiations may achieve, that is anyone's guess. Although dire warnings that failure will lead to civil war may be overblown, the road ahead will be bumpy, and familiar descriptions of Yemen being “on the brink” are likely to resurface.

At its broadest, the National Dialogue is to tackle the distribution of power at the national level. The strongest push for renegotiating center-periphery relations comes from two corners of the country: Aden and the surrounding areas that were once the core of South Yemen on the one hand, and areas under the control of the Huthis in the country's northwest corner on the other. Driven, in part, by the need to include representatives from these two powerful blocks, an initial dialogue template consisting of a “5+1” federal plan is already on the table (article #1). Backed by the current president and international powers, the model broadly seeks to transform Yemen into a federation of five regions plus the Aden economic zone (Yemen is currently divided into 20 provinces plus the capital). The devil will be in the details.

The interests of the regions may indeed drive much of the negotiations; however, a more mundane variable will also require close attention during this process: the increasingly complex personal rivalry between Ali Abdullah Saleh and Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar.

With the national dialogue set to begin exactly two years after his defection brought down the Saleh regime, General Ali Muhsin finds himself in a position of strength. Recently, the media-shy general gave a wide-ranging interview to the widely read Saudi daily al-Sharq al-Awsat (article #2). When asked about the National Dialogue, Muhsin adopted a statesmanlike tone



Yemeni Army Major General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, via <http://www.foreignpolicyblogs.com>

Source:

مصادر تكشف عن مقترح: اليمن الفيدرالي من 6 أقاليم
 “Sources disclose proposal for a six-region federal Yemen” (al-Masdar Online), 11 March 2013, <http://almasdaronline.com/article/42665>

Article 1

...Al-Masdar Online learned from several sources that ideas were put forth by major international sides and discussed within a very limited framework of the main ideas, which include federalism composed of 5 regions + 1 (Aden economic zone), something President Hadi disclosed in a meeting in Aden last week. According to the anonymous source, this is one of the most realistic ideas for post-National Dialogue Yemen and will be one of the main topics on the dialogue agenda, “although there are reservations by the presidency regarding the details on the shape of the regions.”... According to exclusive information, the 6 region plan would include 3 regions in the north and 3 in the south, a single political capital, a sovereign constitution, and a strong national military. Aden will have a unique status as the economic capital and Free Trade Zone according to international standards ...

(continued)

Continued: Lumbering Toward Dialogue in Yemen

to praise King Abdullah and other Gulf leaders for the GCC Agreement, as well as “our friends in Washington, London, Moscow, Paris, Beijing, Berlin and other world capitals.”

*Ex-President Ali Abdullah Saleh, meanwhile, has seen better days. The power cuts plaguing the capital Sana'a in the run-up to the dialogue are being blamed on him (article #3), echoing charges made against him by Yemen's minister of electricity in May 2012. Sabotage and scapegoating are likely to become even more pronounced as negotiations get underway. So will subterfuge and media manipulation. Shortly before the beginning of the dialogue, Saleh-friendly press spoke of a truce being negotiated between the two feuding former allies, who, after all, belong to the same tribe. Ali Muhsin's office was quick to put out a forceful statement of denial (article #4). The relationship between them and other actors remains fluid, and one can do worse than looking at their shifting positions to read the pulse of the complex dynamics that will unfold during the National Dialogue. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

Source:

بيان صادر عن مكتب اللواء علي محسن الأحمر

“Statement issued by General Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar's office” (Mareb Press), 10 March 2013, http://marebpress.net/news_details.php?sid=53028&lng=arabic

Article 3

...General Ali Muhsin's office replied to what was reported in Saleh's media by saying: “This is a clear testament to the bankruptcy and hysteria of Saleh and his supporters in their attempt to stir the pot...The political leadership headed by President Hadi is fully aware of such blatant methods behind which the enemies of the country aim to sabotage the transitional period and impede the efforts of President Hadi and thwart the National Dialogue which we hope will establish a civilian, modern and democratic Yemeni state based on the principles of citizenship, equality, freedom and liberty.”

Source:

اللواء الأحمر: لن أترك عملي وقوى مذهبية تريد التخلص مني

“General al-Ahmar: I will not quit my job, sectarian forces want to get rid of me” (al-Sharq al-Awsat), 3 March 2013, <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=719366&issueno=12514#.UT4D5hwp8F>

Article 2

Q: Following the recent restructuring decisions taken by President Hadi, what is General Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar's position in the current Yemeni Army, and will he be part of the new structure?

A: ...Until now and for the foreseeable future at least, in response to your question, I will remain a soldier in the army, especially since we are now getting past the first stage in the restructuring of the armed forces. This is an opportunity to note that the restructuring of the Yemeni Army, which I have lived, is hard for Yemenis to understand, particularly politicians and civilians, who see the restructuring of the armed forces as if it were simply a matter of a presidential decree being issued and then the situation stabilizes, or if restructuring consisted of cutting and pasting. This is a basic, childish understanding. Those who are waging political battles forget that the army and security services are the institutions that are most sensitive, as with any army and security services they have a unique status. Currently, the Yemeni military and security institutions are undergoing exceptional circumstances, carrying out a daily war with al-Qaeda and with weekly disturbances here and there, these are not stable conditions and require restructuring that is carefully planned with a goal in mind and no margin for error...

Source:

“Attacks against electricity, oil pipelines sharply increase”. 12 March 2013, <http://www.alsahwa-yemen.net/arabic/subjects/5/2013/3/12/28112.htm>

Article 4

...Tribesmen loyal to the former president Ali Abdullah Saleh are accused of targeting the electricity lines, according to Jamal Benomar, the UN Envoy to Yemen who mentioned that in a report presented to the UN Security Council. The Marib electricity station supplies several Yemeni governorates including the capital Sana'a with power. Yemen's electricity supplies have been damaged many times since the eruption of protests against Saleh. Yemen have lost billions of rials as a result of recurring attacks against electricity lines...

Egypt's Police in the Crosshairs

11 March 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *The political and economic dysfunction that has plagued Egypt since Hosni Mubarak was deposed in early 2011 threatens to give way to a breakdown in public order. Police abuses were a key driver of the 25 January 2011 popular mobilization; during the transitional period since, Egyptian crowds have been fighting back and straining the much maligned police force. In early March 2013 policemen in various parts of the country went on strike, voicing grievances that included reform of the Interior Ministry, better working conditions and provision of weapons. It is clear that Egypt's security sector needs reform sooner rather than later. Who should be tasked with this delicate undertaking? What is to be done in the meantime? These questions are provoking much debate in Egypt, and consensus on how to address them does not appear forthcoming. This could have dire consequences, as explained by the editor-in-chief of Egypt's state daily newspaper, al-Ahram (article #1).*

The ruling Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) sees reform of the security sector and the Interior Ministry as its prerogative. The party's links with the Muslim Brotherhood, however, have produced an outcry by those fearing the "ikhwanization" of the security sector (ikhwan is the Arabic word for brothers). Add to this a growing controversy involving Salafist parties and policemen protesting the ban on beards in the force (article #2), and it is clear that religion, politics and security needs are pushing and pulling in different directions that threaten to derail any consensus on reform measures.

One of the key demands of protesting policemen is that they be better armed and allowed greater leeway. Some of the police strikes began after a group refused to deploy to the volatile city of Port Said amid escalating violence. While some attribute the escalation in Port Said to the



Al Gamaa Al-Islamiya seal/crest, via <http://www.ahram.org>

Source:

Abdel Naser Salama, "Honestly... the police on the dock" (al-Ahram), 11 March 2013, <http://www.ahram.org.eg/NewsQ/135327.aspx>

بصدق الشرطة في قفص الاتهام!..

Article 1:

...This situation, in which the safety of citizens is the biggest loser, can no longer go on. The state treasury cannot allow these daily material losses to continue. State silence toward these practices, which a message to other countries that we are barbaric people who deserve no respect, is no longer acceptable. It is unacceptable to not arm policemen to face gunmen who operate openly in the squares and streets. Otherwise, we will remain prisoners to this chaos to no end or until we wake up to the killing of policemen and fall prey to thugs and organized crime. It may be impossible to restore security at that point ...

(continued)

Continued: Egypt's Police in the Crosshairs

excessive use of police force and demand that these excesses be curbed, the policemen and their supporters see things differently. This impasse, combined with increased vandalism, has produced scattered calls for citizens to take their own protective measures against roaming militias, which for some include the police themselves. Seen from afar, this is a troubling scenario, one which the Egyptian Army has already come out against (Article #3). The specter of the Salafist al-Gamaa al-Islamiya (GI) policing parts of the southern city of Assyut likely sends shivers down millions of spines, given the group's involvement in the mass killing of tourists in Luxor, among other atrocities in the 1990s (notwithstanding the group's subsequent rejection of violence in the 2000s).

*Looming large in the background of all of this is the Egyptian military. Since Mubarak's downfall the military has been the guarantor of security. In Port Said the military filled the vacuum created by the withdrawal of police forces. Having the military play policeman at the national level, though, is not a viable solution (article #4). What, then, is the alternative? **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

Source:

بصدق الشرطة في قفص الاتهام!!
 "Bearded policemen remain at loggerheads with Interior Ministry" (Egypt Independent), 10 March 2013, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/bearded-policemen-remain-loggerheads-interior-ministry>

Article 2:

...Unlike the usual "million-man" rallies organized by Islamists, there were barely 500 people taking part in the protest held by bearded policemen this past Friday in the Cairo district of Abdeen. There were, however, posters similar to the ones found at these mass rallies, announcing the support of a number of Salafi political parties, such as the Nour and Raya parties. The bearded policemen are demanding that they be allowed back to work without being made to shave their beards. The individuals who came out in support of the officers at Friday's protest were themselves predominantly male and bearded...

Source: "Army will not tolerate 'political militias': Egyptian military source" (al-Ahram English), 11 March 2013, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/0/66626/Egypt/0/Army-will-not-tolerate-political-militias-Egyptian.aspx>

Article 3:

...A military source who spoke to Ahram Online on Monday slammed recent statements by the office of Egypt's prosecutor-general in which the latter gave the green light to members of the public to make citizen's arrests of anyone found committing acts of vandalism. The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the move would open the door to the formation of "private militias" and raise the spectre of "civil war." ... Meanwhile, Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya's Construction and Development Party announced plans this week to establish 'security committees' in several Upper Egyptian cities to replace police in the event that the strikes persist."

Source: Amr Shubaki, "The Army is not an alternative to the police" (al-Masry al-Youm), 5 March 2013, <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/node/1544271>

Article 4:

...The solution is not for the interior ministry to disappear and for the army to take over its role, as this will transform officers whose task is to safeguard national security and borders – and in states of emergency protect public and private facilities – into security officers tasked with criminal investigations and inquiries both before and after crimes are committed, as well as confronting thugs and outlaws and riots on the streets and in stadiums... Many, though not all the people, have become pawns to political agendas and forget the officers, soldiers and security men who are killed daily defending your and my security...

The PKK Peace Process Moves Forward: 'Silence the Guns'

12 March 2013

OE Watch Commentary: The 'Imrali process' or 'peace process'- a series of talks to end PKK violence in Turkey, appears to be moving forward faster than anyone anticipated. The process first came to light with the Turkish Prime Minister's declaration on 28 December 2012, that fresh talks had been initiated with the group's jailed leader Abdullah Öcalan. The ultimate goal of the talks is to end the armed violence and get the PKK to lay down its arms. Öcalan is a key figure in this process because, despite the fact that he has been in prison since his capture in 1999, he still has considerable prestige over the group, which Erdoğan hopes will prove to be a useful asset in the process.

Since the start of 2013, several rounds of talks have already taken place between the PKK leader, members of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), the Turkish government (represented by Turkey's National Intelligence Organization), and the PKK's military leaders who are based in the Qandil Mountains of northern Iraq. On 18 March, upon returning from their third visit with Öcalan, the BDP delegates announced that Öcalan was to make a 'historic call' on 21 March 2013, the day that marks Newroz (or Nowruz), which is a "feast of spring" celebrated by Kurds in Turkey (it is also celebrated throughout the countries of the Middle East and Central Asia and considered the Kurdish New Year.)

As expected, on 21 March, Öcalan called on the PKK to "silence the guns" and pull out beyond Turkish borders to pave the way for a negotiated settlement. The first

“PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan: “From now on, the weapons should be silenced, we are at a point where ideas and politics should speak... I say, in front of the millions of people who are heeding my call, that a new era is starting, not guns but politics are coming to the forefront...”



Demonstrators wave pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party flags during a rally to celebrate the spring festival of Newroz in Istanbul Mar. 17, 2013., via Al-monitor.com

Source: Cengiz Çandar, “Yeni dönem başlıyor – Serdemeke nu desk pe dike (A new era is beginning),” Radikal.com.tr, 22 March 2013, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=1126200&Yazar=CENGIZ-CANDAR&CategoryID=78>

“What was read yesterday was a ‘Mesopotamia-Kurdistan-Anatolia peace and unity declaration’. I listened to the ‘historic’ call from Abdullah Öcalan on ‘historic’ Newroz, as I was watching it live on [channel] NTV. Everything was ‘historic’. A Newroz celebration with over a million people in Diyarbakır, with PKK flags, and Abdullah Öcalan posters. All of Turkey’s main TV channels were showing it live for hours. The statement of [Öcalan] sentenced to life-long prison in Imrali, was read by two members of parliament, first in Kurdish, then in Turkish and then analyzed on various national TV channels. The topic is the main topic on all national and international channels. We really did have a ‘historic’ Newroz.

These words highlight a ‘new era’:

“From now on, the weapons should be silenced, we are at a point where ideas and politics

Continued: The PKK Peace Process Moves Forward: 'Silence the Guns'

passage below from the Turkish press includes portions of his important message, which was read out loud in both Kurdish and Turkish to a crowd of over a million people gathered in a square in Diyarbakır, to celebrate Newroz. In his message, he fell short of calling for a cease-fire or laying down arms, but he asked the "armed members to move out of Turkey's borders" and said that "...we have arrived at a point where guns should be silenced and ideas and politics should talk. I am saying... that a new era is beginning, [one where] not guns, but politics should come to the forefront. The time has come for our armed elements to move beyond the borders." (He did not provide a time table for such a withdrawal.) As the accompanying passages from the Turkish press demonstrate, the process is moving forward faster than expected, and is creating new hopes in Turkey for lasting peace.

It must be noted that this is not the first time that the PKK has made such a call. The group has declared several cease-fires over its 30-year history, but this is the first time that it is taking place as part of a comprehensive and structured 'solution process'. In addition, it appears from his statements that this time, Öcalan has toned down his demands for "democratic autonomy" for the Kurds, which has historically been a contentious issue. Other demands include general amnesty for PKK fighters; the transfer of Öcalan to house arrest, and specific demands for articles related to the Kurds in the new constitution, currently in process of a re-write.

Turkey has a long and painful history with the Kurdish ethno-nationalist terrorist group PKK (the Kurdistan Workers' Party), in which almost 40,000 lives have been lost over the last 30 years- a death toll that is at least 10 times more than that of the Northern Ireland conflict.
End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

should speak... I say, in front of the millions of people who are heeding my call, that a new era is starting, not guns but politics are coming to the forefront. The time has come for our armed elements to move beyond the borders."

Clearly, the message we need to take from this is that Abdullah Öcalan's assessment is that, "The underlying reasons for the PKK's armed fight in Turkey no longer exist. From now on, our demands will be expressed through democratic politics" and that he has "closed a historic era and opened a new one" for the PKK and the Kurds.

"...The 'solution process' is in four-wheel drive gear. It is pressing on in difficult terrain without slowing down."

Source: Güneri Cıvaoglu, "Çözüm sürecine destek (Support for the 'Solution process')," Milliyet.com.tr, 12 March 2013, <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/-cozum-surecine-destek/siyaset/siyasyazardetay/12.03.2013/1679177/default.htm>

"Within the political calendar, the "solution process" is in four-wheel drive gear.

It is pressing on in difficult terrain without slowing down.

In fact...

[It is moving] faster than anyone would have guessed.

The agenda looks like this:

- The release of military members and civilians being held by the PKK.
- A "ceasefire" or "inaction" declaration by the PKK on Newroz [Kurdish spring celebrations].
- During the first few months of summer, for the PKK members in Turkey to leave the country and go across the border...

I want to think that we won't wait too long for the PKK to move into the phase of "laying down its arms" and for the "Kurdish problem" to become history by being solved through just, democratic means which will culminate in equal status [for the Kurds]. In the pages of the calendar, there will also be "radical changes" that Ankara has to make as well."

Turkish Perspectives on Secretary of State Kerry's Visit 2 March 2013

“Turkey wants the U.S. to start seriously planning for ‘humanitarian aid corridors’ in northern Syria; and provide more support to the opposition instead of making diplomatic maneuvers that will prolong the Assad regime.”

OE Watch Commentary: John Kerry paid a visit to Turkey on 1 March 2013 as part of his first overseas trip as the newly appointed US Secretary of State. In the coming months, both the Turkish prime minister and the foreign minister are expected to visit Washington D.C., continuing a string of high-level visits between the two countries. This has led many on both sides of the Atlantic to herald a “golden-age” in U.S.-Turkish relations.

However, commentary in the Turkish press claimed that Kerry's visit highlighted the divergence between the two countries' foreign policy agendas, pointing out that, despite common goals in most areas, the means that each country advocates to reach those goals are quite different. The top issues on the agenda were as follows: with regard to Syria, both countries would like to see a political transition, but Turkey wants to see the U.S. take a more active role and help plan humanitarian aid corridors in northern Syria; with regard to Turkish-Israel relations, the U.S. would like to see reconciliation between the two countries, including Turkey toning down its anti-Israeli rhetoric; with regard to Iraq, both countries want a unified, stable Iraq, but Turkey has become close to the Kurdish Regional Government, while it views the U.S. as siding with the Maliki government in the name of political stability.



US Secretary of State John Kerry, left, meets with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu at Ankara Palas. Photograph: Jacquelyn Martin/AFP/Getty Images, via <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

Source: Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, “Ankara ‘Suriye’ Kerry ‘İsrail’ dedi (Ankara said ‘Syria’, Kerry said ‘Israel’),” Milliyet.com.tr, 2 March 2013, <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/ankara-suriye-kerry-israil-dedi/siyaset/siyasyetazardetay/02.03.2013/1675309/default.htm>

“...In all three of his meetings, Kerry sent the message that, “As the Obama administration, for us to be able to work comfortably with you, you have to control the anti-Israel rhetoric.” Kerry also said that Washington would like to see relations between Turkey and Israel ‘normalize’ as soon as possible.

... Kerry does not want to start Obama's second term as the ‘government official who does not defend Israel’. So the stance in Ankara was also targeted towards the Washington public.

In yesterday's meetings, Ankara had some complaints for Washington as well. Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister highlighted that the U.S. is not getting sufficiently involved in Syria, and that the 60 million dollars that the Obama administration pledged to the opposition is not enough to end the Syrian crisis. Turkey wants the U.S. to start seriously planning for ‘humanitarian aid corridors’ in northern Syria; and provide more support for the opposition instead of making diplomatic maneuvers that will prolong the Assad regime. They made this clear.”

Continued: Turkish Perspectives on Secretary of State Kerry's Visit

*One important outcome of the visit, as reported in the mainstream Turkish dailies, was that the new secretary of state took a firm position opposing Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's recent words likening Zionism to crimes against humanity. (At a U.N. Alliance of Civilizations meeting in Vienna on 27 February he had said: "Just as with Zionism, anti-Semitism and fascism, it has become necessary to view Islamophobia as a crime against humanity.") Kerry's stance, calling the comments "objectionable," was interpreted as a slight departure from previous U.S. administrations' softer stance on Erdoğan's anti-Israel rhetoric. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)***

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu,
via <http://www.todayszaman.com>



Source: "U.S., Turkey divided on Israel after PM Erdoğan's Zionism remarks," Hurriyet Daily News, 1 March 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-turkey-divided-on-israel-after-pm-erdogans-zionism-remarks.aspx?pageID=238&nid=42181>

"While publicly labeling the remarks by Erdoğan as "objectionable," Kerry also delivered a carefully tailored warning to his country's NATO ally over significance of freedom of expression for reaching to democratic standards.

"We not only disagree with it, we found it objectionable," Kerry said on March 1 at a joint press conference following talks with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, as he noted that he had raised the issue directly with Davutoğlu and would do so with Erdoğan during his meeting, which was scheduled to take place shortly after the press conference.

We want to see them [Turkey and Israel] work together in order to be able to go beyond. I believe that's possible. It is essential that Turkey and Israel find a way to take a step in order to rekindle their historic cooperation," Kerry said, while noting that Davutoğlu also expressed a "genuine desire" for rebuilding ties with Israel."

The Syrian Opposition in Their Own Words

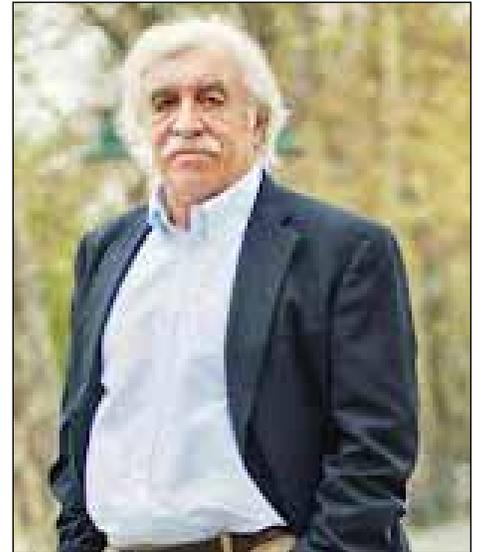
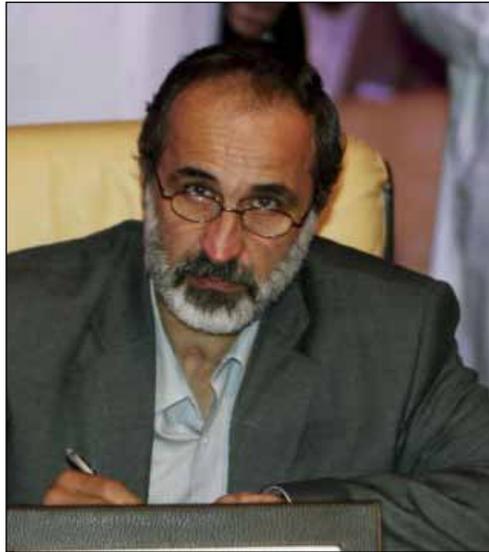
6 March 2013

*“We are against the division of Syria. This is our red line...
The Syrian mosaic should stay intact.”*

OE Watch Commentary: On 4 March 2013 four Turkish journalists sat down for an exclusive interview with the President of the National Coalition for Opposition Forces and the Syrian Revolution, Sheikh Mouaz al-Khatib. The Coalition, in short, is a Syrian opposition umbrella organization that was established in Qatar in November 2012. In addition to Sheikh Mouaz, Monzer Makhous, the Syrian opposition’s ambassador to France (the first country to recognize the coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people), was also present. Sheikh Mouaz had recently attracted attention regarding comments he made about being open to negotiations with the regime, and he fielded the Turkish journalists’ questions on that topic, among others. It should be noted that he recently, abruptly resigned as OE Watch went to press.

The conversation, as reported by Turkish journalists in the days that followed this interview, included important messages from the Syrian opposition to Turkey and to the international community. As the accompanying passages from the Turkish press show, the conversation included discussions on the presence of extremist elements in the anti-regime forces, Iranian and Russian support for the regime, the situation of Alawites and Christians, Syria’s unity, and possible dialogue with the regime.

On the issue of extremists within



President of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces Ahmad Mouaz Al-Khatib Al-Hasani (right); and prominent Turkish journalist Cengiz Çandar (left), via <http://www.voanews.com>

Source: Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, “Sakalımıza değil akan kana bakın, (Don’t look at our beards, look at the blood that is being spilt),” *Milliyet.com.tr*, 6 March 2013, <http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/sakalimiza-degil-akan-kana-bakin/dunya/dunyadetay/06.03.2013/1676874/default.htm>

“We are against the division of Syria. This is our red line. We can talk about what kind of government we will have during our first Parliament meeting. In some countries, local government is powerful; in others it is different... An Alawite state won’t happen. The Syrians don’t want this. The Syrian mosaic should stay intact. It won’t be unicolored. That is Assad’s plan if he feels like he is going to lose. But it won’t work.

The existence of foreign jihadists is being used to undermine the legitimacy of our revolution. They are a small number. We are not in contact with them but we can win them over in the future. Some countries are sending their radicals to us, in order to get rid of them.

When I remind Khatib about the fact that the Turkish media has kept its distance from the Syrian opposition due to their images of having beards and looking ‘Islamist’, he says, ‘Please do not look at our beards, look at the blood that is being spilt in Syria...’ He also says, ‘[Syria] is not Afghanistan, and it will not become so...’ ”

(continued)

Continued: The Syrian Opposition in Their Own Words

*the anti-regime forces, Mouaz al-Khatib noted that their number is being exaggerated, and that there is only a small number of foreign extremist fighters, most of whom, he claims, can be won over. He underlined that “Syria is not Afghanistan and will not become so.” He claimed that Assad gets emboldened by the Iranian and Russian examples, looking at how the Iranian regime crushed the “Green Revolution” and the Grozny example in Chechnya. On the issue of a potential sectarian war, he claimed that they do not have a sectarian war, but that things might head in that direction if the war is prolonged. He made the point that Syrian unity is paramount and that they are opposed to a potential break-up of Syria. However, he refrained from directly answering any questions regarding potential negotiations with the regime. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)***

“[Syria] is not Afghanistan, and it will not become so...”

“...We do not have a sectarian war, but it might unfortunately head toward that direction if the war is prolonged.”

Source: Cengiz Çandar, “Suriye muhalefet lideri diyor ki... (The Syrian opposition leader says...),” Radikal.com.tr, 6 March 2013, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=1123984&CategoryID=98>

“On the issue of the ‘Jihadi’ and ‘Salafi’ elements within the opposition... He is opposed to the concept of ‘Jihadi’. He reminds that ‘Jihad’ is a holy concept in Islam. He says, “I don’t have direct contact with the Salafis but we can win them through dialogue.”

“On the issue of how long the regime has left, Sheikh Mouaz does not give us a clear observation. In response to our persistent questions on the topic of talking to the regime, he says, “The regime is making things complicated,” and blames them for the stalemate. At this point, the opposition is unable to topple the regime through ‘military victory’; but the regime- while it has not fully collapsed- cannot control large parts of Syria anymore.

He thinks the main reason for the situation to continue as is, is that Bashar Assad ‘still thinks he can crush the resistance’. He thinks that Russia and Iran are telling Assad this. The Russians remind Assad of the Grozny example in Chechnya, and the Iranians remind him of how they crushed the ‘Green Revolution’ following the Presidential elections there. And Bashar thinks that by using force and following the Iranian and Russian examples, he can have success.”

Source: Mustafa Akyol, “An afternoon with the Syrian opposition,” Hurriyet Daily News, 6 March 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/an-afternoon-with-the-syrian-opposition.aspx?PageID=238&NID=42399&NewsCatID=411>

One of my queries was about the much-discussed issue of extremists within the anti-regime forces. He said that the al-Assad regime and their allies were exploiting this matter. “90 percent of the revolutionary forces are under our command,” he noted. “The rest include some foreign fighters with extremist views, but most of them can be persuaded around.”

... it was important that extremists do not turn Syria’s war for freedom into a sectarian war between Sunnis and Alawites. Sheikh al-Khatib was also cautious about this matter, saying, “we do not have a sectarian war, but it might unfortunately head toward that direction if the war is prolonged.”

Lala Salama - the DRC's "Sleep in Peace" Tax that Might Be Prolonging Conflict

15 March 2013

“Now lala salama is more about money than ideology.”

OE Watch Commentary: It is called “lala salama,” Swahili for “sleep in peace.” However, as the accompanying article relates, despite its rather restful-sounding name, lala salama is an illegal burdensome tax in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) imposed on the people, often poor villagers, by both the army and rebels. One rebel group has perhaps chosen a more honest name for it: “rengera buzima,” which means “protect life” in the Kinyarwanda dialect. Think of it as protection money, extortion to prevent bodily harm. This tax reflects not just the economic difficulties of the villagers, but also the low and irregular pay of some combatants, and, on a larger scale, the problems confronting the government as it struggles to bring recognized legitimate governance to the people in a conflict-ridden region.

The DRC, especially its eastern portion, has been the site of innumerable atrocities committed against civilians, including murder, rape, and mutilation. Adding to the sufferings of the population victimized by these gruesome acts is lala salama, a tax on a people struggling to eke out a living, ironically in a land of enormous mineral wealth. That mineral wealth, though, is a significant cause for the fighting and poverty in the eastern DRC, as warring parties, including foreign nations, have fought to control and/or steal these resources.

One of the largest armed groups, the M23, has some of its roots in a 23 March 2009 treaty that ended a rebellion, enabling the former rebels, mostly Tutsi fighters, to join the army. Three years later, however, having failed to integrate into the military, many mutinied, and the March 23 Movement, named for the date of the now failed treaty, was born.¹ They would go on to control significant portions of Eastern Congo, and for a period were even in command of Goma, a city with over one million people which included UN peacekeepers.

The army, the M23, and several other rebel groups, which have multiplied in number over the years, have



DRC Army photo by William Lloyd-George/IPS via <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/03/local-communities-forced-to-pay-salaries-of-drc-army-and-rebels/>

Source: Taylor Toeka Kapala, “Local Communities Forced to Pay Salaries of DRC Army and Rebels,” Inter Press Service, 15 Mar 2013, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/03/local-communities-forced-to-pay-salaries-of-drc-army-and-rebels/>

... On the way to his fields, Denise Mambo, a resident of Kitshanga, North Kivu in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, stops at a rope laid across his path. “No one is allowed to go past this rope without paying the ‘lala salama’,” a Congolese army (FARDC) sergeant known only by the nickname Django tells IPS...

...Each person on their way to harvest their fields must pay a tax of one dollar or an equivalent of two to three kilogrammes of harvested crops to the men posted at the informal checkpoints...

...Ever since the failed integration of former rebels into the Congolese army in 2009, which led to the M23 rebellion or army mutiny in April 2012, the civilian population has become one of the main sources of income to feed the FARDC, armed rebel groups, and Rwandese militia such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda...

...Today, all five provinces of eastern DRC abound with militia, and thousands of civilians have been victims of looting, rape and murder, according to Juvenal Munubo, a parliamentarian for Walikale, North

Continued: Lala Salama - the DRC's "Sleep in Peace" Tax that Might Be Prolonging Conflict

imposed lala salama, as well as other illegal taxes, in order to offset low, irregular and/or absent wages. According to Captain George Sakombi of the 810th Regiment in Masisi, North Kivu, "If we are lucky enough to receive money, we get 60,000 dollars [in a month] to pay one thousand men, including officers." As for the rebels, who in earlier years were fighting, at least in part, for ideology, the article relates "Now lala salama is more about money than ideology." Some rebel groups have even formed just to collect lala salama.

Periodically the army and rebels will fight over who will control the taxes in a certain area. The article describes how "Each person on their way to harvest their fields must pay a tax of one dollar or an equivalent of two to three kilogrammes of harvested crops to the men posted at the informal checkpoints... Sometimes the army and the militia will start fighting just to control a market or a path leading to the fields."

*With the imposition of such economic hardships as lala salama and other taxes, it becomes difficult for either group - the military or the rebels - to gain popular support among the people. It also complicates the prospects for peace in the DRC, for these taxes add economic incentives to the soldiers and rebels, far removed from the capital, to maintain the status quo - conflict in a largely ungoverned region. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

1. "Congo M23 Faction Takes Control of Rebel Area; Other Faction Leader Arrested in Rwanda," Associated Press, 16 March 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/congo-m23-faction-takes-control-of-rebel-area-other-faction-leader-arrested-in-rwanda/2013/03/16/0f86d714-8e2a-11e2-adca-74ab31da3399_story.html

Kivu, and a member of the National Assembly's Committee for Defence and Security. "But civilians are also subjected to unbearable financial exploitation," he told IPS...

...Although army chiefs say the average salary of a soldier increased from 10 to 60 dollars a month between 2006 and 2013, soldiers say their pay is inadequate and irregular. Civilians have been the easiest prey for racketeering...

..."We were in an army with no pay," Lieutenant-Colonel Vianney Kazarama, the spokesperson for the M23 rebels who took control of Goma during November 2012, told IPS...

...The "lala salama" tax has encouraged the creation of armed groups. In North Kivu, for example, between 2008 and 2013, the number of armed groups increased from 12 to 25, according to civil society organisations. In South Kivu, the number of armed groups has risen from 11 in 2008 to some 20 in 2013...

The army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as rebel groups have been accused of extorting money or goods from the local populations through the use of a tax called "lala salama."

South Africa's Need to Police the Police

7 March 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *The video of Mozambican taxi driver Mido Macia went viral. Dragged behind a South African police vehicle and then allegedly beaten to death at a police station, it raised fresh concerns about South Africa's police force several months after it had opened fire on striking miners, killing 34 and wounding 78.¹ As the accompanying article states, South Africa's political leaders and police officials appear to be in denial as to the depth of the problem, writing it off to a "handful of officers." However, these and other incidents continue to undermine the public's confidence in the SAPS - South African Police Service. With South Africa being southern Africa's regional economic powerhouse, as well as a major contributor to peacekeeping missions, concerns regarding its civil stability extend beyond its borders.*

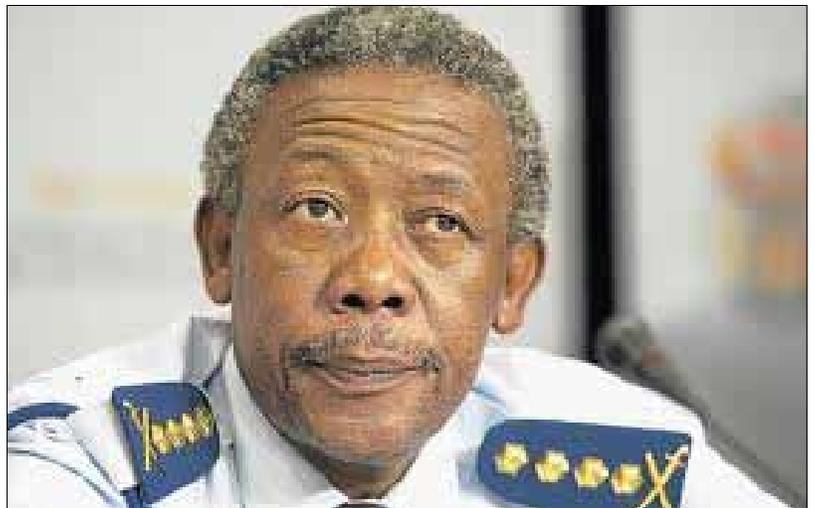


Picture of Mido Macia prior to being dragged behind a South African police vehicle, via <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/feb/28/man-dies-south-africa-police-van>

Some of the blame has been placed on Jackie Selebi, who, "despite his lack of experience in and knowledge of policing," was appointed in 1999 by then-President Mbeki as the SAPS National Commissioner. When crime rates started to significantly increase, Selebi apparently thought that increasing the police force by 70,000 officers would curb it. Unfortunately, the push to rapidly increase the numbers resulted in (1) applicants not being properly screened and (2) training cut from two years to only one. Compounding the recruitment and training problems was the implementation of additional measures that resulted in less oversight of the force. In the end, large numbers of poorly trained police, many who probably never should have been allowed onto the force, began patrolling South African streets.

Selebi was finally forced from his job after being convicted of corruption, but he was replaced by President Jacob Zuma's friend and political ally, Bheki Cele, who had no policing experience. Describing Cele's approach, the article states, "To emphasize the 'maximum force' doctrine taking root among South Africa's political leaders, military ranks were re-introduced and 'shoot to kill' political rhetoric became commonplace." Eventually Cele lost his job when it was found he acted unlawfully on a police headquarters' lease deal.

The deterioration in the quality of the SAPS has tarnished its public image. It comes as no surprise that "[less] than half the adult population trust the police (42%) and 66% think that corruption is widespread in the police." The revelation that Hilton Botha, the police detective heading the Oscar Pistorius investigation, "was facing seven attempted murder charges himself relating to a 2011 shooting while he was on duty" has probably not helped.² He has since been replaced.



Jacob (Jackie) Sello Selebi, via <http://www.timeslive.co.za>

(continued)

Continued: South Africa's Need to Police the Police

Recommendations from the National Development Plan to reform the police include a competitive selection process for the SAPS National Commissioner and deputies. However, to date this and other recommendations have not been implemented. End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)

1. Lydia Polgreen, "South African Official Defends Police Killing 34," New York Times, 17 Aug 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/18/world/africa/south-african-police-kill-30-striking-miners.html?pagewanted=1&_r=0
2. John Matisonn, "In South Africa, Crime and Violence Are Permanent Headlines," National Public Radio, 22 Feb 2013, <http://www.npr.org/2013/02/21/172636759/in-south-africa-crime-and-violence-are-permanent-headlines>

Source: "Roots of the Crisis Facing the South African Police," Institute for Security Studies, 7 Mar 2013, http://www.issafrica.org/iss_today.php?ID=1604

...Government's denial of the crisis may be caused by the fact that it is rooted in the longstanding and persistent problem of poor leadership in the South African Police Service (SAPS) South Africa's political leaders have not recognised policing as an important profession that requires high levels of skill and integrity...

..As a result, almost 70 000 more people have been recruited into the organization since 2002. Unfortunately, Selebi was less interested in the importance of the quality and integrity of these recruits...

...Selebi's unwillingness to learn from the extensive policing experience around him or from international studies meant that he had little appreciation of the dangers that mass recruitment drives could pose. Hundreds if not thousands of people who either failed the basic requirements or were otherwise not fit to be police officials were allowed into the SAPS...

...Management systems started to weaken as Selebi appointed people to senior posts regardless of their expertise or abilities...

...Other poor appointments made it abundantly clear that, under Selebi, promotion was based on political and personal loyalties and had little to do with professionalism or integrity...

...With the weakening of specialised detective units, house and business robberies soared: between 2006 and 2009 these crimes had increased by 100% and 296% respectively. The FCS units have only recently been re-established and SAPS is struggling with public order policing, as the Marikana massacre so tragically highlighted...

...Until the NDP's recommendations are implemented, budget allocations to the SAPS will be spent on poorly considered policing strategies that are not rooted in international or local best practice. Frustrated and demoralised police officials will continue to engage in corruption and other acts of misconduct. Public mistrust of the police will remain, which will in turn limit the SAPS' ability to reduce crime...

Mido Macia was dragged behind a South African police vehicle. His death and other incidents involving the South African Police Service have raised public concerns regarding the police's ability to police themselves.

CAR: Seleka Insurgency Still Occupying Towns

10 March 2013

“The irony of the accompanying article is that the Seleka insurgency is supposed to have been more or less extinguished in January.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Central African Republic (CAR) has never been known for the strength of its rule of law. Every year from 2009 to 2012, for instance, Foreign Policy magazine has ranked CAR within its top ten most failed states. However, with the reemergence of the Seleka insurgency group that has now instated its laws throughout many of CAR’s cities, the country looks to be in even greater decline.*

The irony of the accompanying article, which details the cities wherein the insurgency has some degrees of administrative and executive control, is that the Seleka insurgency is supposed to have been more or less extinguished in January. The group, composed of various rebel factions that signed a peace deal with the government in Bangui in 2007, regrouped in late 2012, and in December began marching west across the country, occupying towns and threatening the overthrow of President François Bozizé. Though the government signed a power-sharing deal in January that saw the appointment of a Seleka affiliate as the minister of defense, Seleka’s ultimate demands – that Bozizé step down – were not accepted. Thus, despite the détente, Seleka’s goals remain unfulfilled.

To that end, even in spite of the fact that the rebels occupy the towns detailed on the map below, they have succeeded in occupying two more towns since the publication of this map in early March. On 11 March they entered Gombo in southeastern

Source: Fanny Minao N’Diaye, “Centrafrique: Bilan des Villes Sous l’administration de Seleka en Mars 2013” [“Central Africa Republic: Summary of Towns Under the Administrative Control of Seleka in March 2013.”] La Nouvelle Centrafrique (Bangui, Central African Republic), 10 March 2013: <http://www.lanouvellecentrafrique.info/?p=3121>.

Article:

The city of Bria was only the beginning, because the phenomenon is likely to grow. Now, seven cities in the Central African Republic, and potentially more, might come under the “administration” of Seleka insurgency. The central government no longer has any kind of authority. This is the first step in the country’s complete ‘Somaliazation’.

In the past, especially in the territories that Bangui had forgotten in the north, it regularly happened that rebel factions’ informal laws reigned. But this had never occurred to such a magnitude, as close to the capital, or had it caused so much confusion and left the government with such little ability to react. In short, Seleka soldiers are now showing themselves to be able to exert sovereign and executive powers of their conquered territories.



Reported Seleka movements throughout the Central African Republic (CAR) in March 2013, via <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/03/local-communities-forced-to-pay-salaries-of-drc-army-and-rebels/>

Continued: CAR: Seleka Insurgency Still Occupying Towns

CAR, and then proceeded to occupy the town of Bassangou, on the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In addition, the government of CAR reported last week that Seleka had killed four more government soldiers.

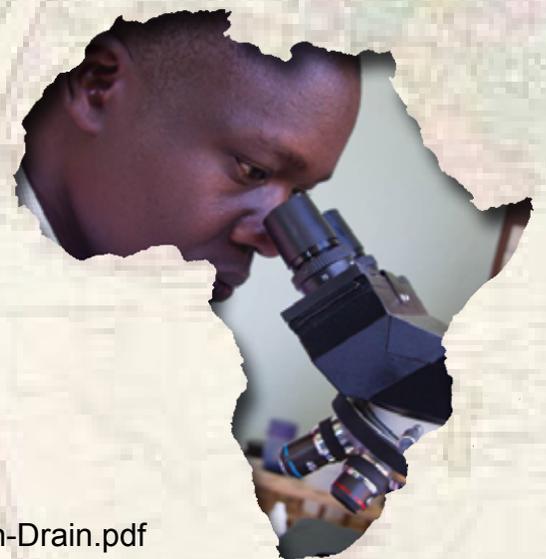
*In short, the reality is that, barring some combination of innovative political and counterinsurgency solutions, Seleka's pull over the country is likely to grow before it wanes. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

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

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

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

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



The Changing View from Paris on the Security Landscape in West Africa

11 March 2013

“Paris seems to increasingly hold the viewpoint that even its one-time go-to African allies such as Senegal, Benin, and Cameroon are now no longer above the waves of terrorist activities that have been sweeping across West Africa.”



At Risk Zones' for French citizens as seen by the Quai d'Orsay [the equivalent of the French State Department] as of 1 March 2013

- Travel is strongly discouraged
- Travel without a pressing reason is discouraged
- Travel should be undertaken with a normal sense of vigilance

OE Watch Commentary: West Africa was once under French control. Now, according to the accompanying piece, Paris seems to increasingly hold the viewpoint that even its one-time go-to regional African allies such as Senegal, Benin, and Cameroon are now no longer above the waves of terrorist activities that have been sweeping across West Africa.

The renewed French wariness of its state and citizens' security in Africa is inevitably – and to some degree, ironically – a result of its recent intervention in Mali. Indeed, Parisian government officials involved in the 2011 Libya intervention, like those in the United States, are all too aware of the regional aftershocks that can arise in the face of such drastic regime changes. To that end, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs has forbidden its citizens from entering most of Mali and Nigeria, as well as parts of Niger, Mauritania, Chad, and the Central African Republic.

In the wake of the potential French backlash, these moves were to be somewhat expected: what has been unique, however, is France's newfound worry about historically stable ally countries. For instance, Cameroon, which has been a more or less consistent French ally in the postcolonial period, is now on a restricted list after a French family of seven was recently kidnapped. In the same vein, Paris recently added northern Benin to its list of travel warnings. Even stalwart Senegal is not above the fray, causing French suspicion as a result of recent terrorist suspect arrests, as well as a false bomb

Source via <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/JA2721p010-013.xml0/tchad-niger-mali-securiteterrorisme-l-afrique-dans-le-rouge.html>

Source: Rémi Carayol, “Terrorisme: L’Afrique Dans la Rouge,” [Terrorism: Africa in the Red] Jeune Afrique, 11 March 2013: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/JA2721p010-013.xml0/tchad-niger-mali-securiteterrorisme-l-afrique-dans-le-rouge.html>.

Article:

From kidnappings of foreigners to terrorist attacks: will the Malian conflict promote the mobilization of jihadist groups across the continent?

A drawing by Willem published in the French newspaper Libération shows a presumably French fist pounding on Mali, which, instead of shattering it, makes jihadists spread out to other neighboring countries in West Africa, including, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger. “Fair enough,” admitted a French diplomat, who played a crucial role at the Quai d’Orsay.

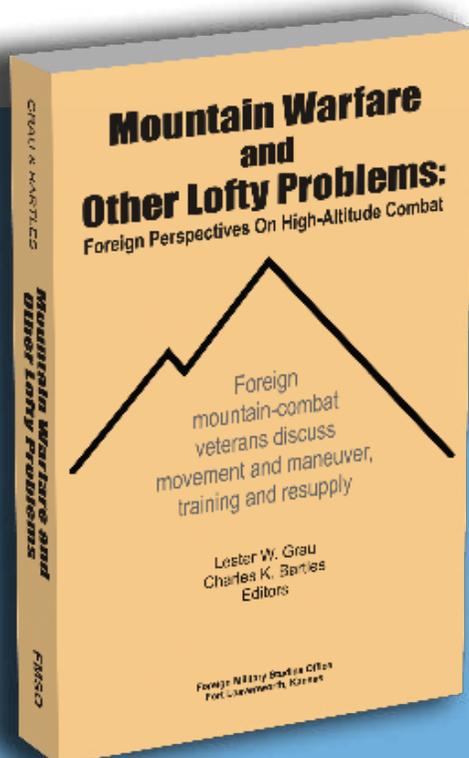
Continued: The View from Paris on the Security Landscape in West Africa

threat, in the capital Dakar.

In sum, it appears that France's renewed regional military presence is, rightly or wrongly, putting it on the defensive in more ways than just on the battlefield. End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)

Three of the countries that Paris is particularly worried about are Niger, Mauritania, and Chad. [Even Burkina Faso and Senegal, normally thought to be safe, are now questioned.]

After the kidnapping of the [French] Moulin-Fournier in Cameroon recently, the Quai d'Orsay reacted quickly. Immediately, it put the north of Cameroon in its red zone, as well as northern Benin, which angered Cotonou. Red is the color that corresponds to the highest level of hazard identified by the French Ministry's crisis center. Today, this belt extends to almost all of the Sahel. In all, 33 African countries out of 54 are partially or totally formally restricted (red) or are "not recommended except for compelling reasons" (orange). "The number of these restrictions has exploded in recent years," says a ministry official. This has real implications for the countries concerned including decreased tourist presence as well as the closures of NGOs and businesses. Didier Lebret, director of the Crisis Center, is aware: "We want this map to be as objective as possible, since the consequences for the country are sometimes devastating."



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.

Somaliland Worries About Lifting of Arms Embargo in Somalia

7 March 2013

“While the end of the arms embargo may be good news for Mogadishu, Somalia’s autonomous breakaway regions – Puntland, Somaliland, Baioda, and Jubaland – are worried that the new development will threaten their hard-won security.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The United Nations Security Council recently voted to lift a 21-year ban on the sale of arms to Somalia, a move that, as the accompanying article details, has some of Somalia’s autonomous regions like Somaliland, Puntland, and others worried.*

The recently passed British-led UN resolution puts an end to an arms embargo that had been imposed on the country since 1992 in the aftermath of the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. The ban was originally intended to quell violence in a country that has had, until recently, little semblance of central governance. However, with tangible gains made in security and development, the international community is now in broad agreement that the arms ban should be lifted to allow weapons in to help the Somali army shore up its monitoring capabilities and a drawdown of international peacekeepers. As an Al-Jazeera article notes: “The UN resolution would allow sales of such weapons as automatic assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, but leaves in place a ban on surface-to-air missiles, large-calibre guns, howitzers, cannons and mortars as well as anti-tank guided weapons, mines and night vision weapon sights.”

While the end of the arms embargo may be good news for Mogadishu, Somalia’s autonomous breakaway regions – Puntland, Somaliland, Baioda, and Jubaland – are worried that the new development will threaten their hard-won security. Although these regions have their own armies,



Source: “Somalia: Somaliland Says Federal Gov’t Not Ready for Arms Embargo Lift,” Garowe Online (Garowe, Somalia), 7 March 2013: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201303080075.html>.

Article:

The northwestern breakaway region of Somaliland expressed discontent over the UN Security Council decision to partially lift the 21-year old arms embargo ban on Somalia, Garowe Online reports.

The Somaliland government’s Foreign Affairs Minister, Mohamed Abdullahi Omar, spoke to BBC Somali Service on Thursday and stated that the Security Council did not evaluate the consequences of the partial lift.

“We [Somaliland] recognize the decision by the Security Council as a decision that was not properly examined nor assessed. And we believe it is ill-timed an decision that could bring insecurity to East Africa,” said Minister Omar.

Continued: Somaliland Worries About Lifting of Arms Embargo in Somalia

however nascent, they worry that a weak Mogadishu will be unable to effectively monitor and control the spread of newfound weapons. These regions are not alone: so too have rights groups like Amnesty International called the weapons ban removal “premature.”

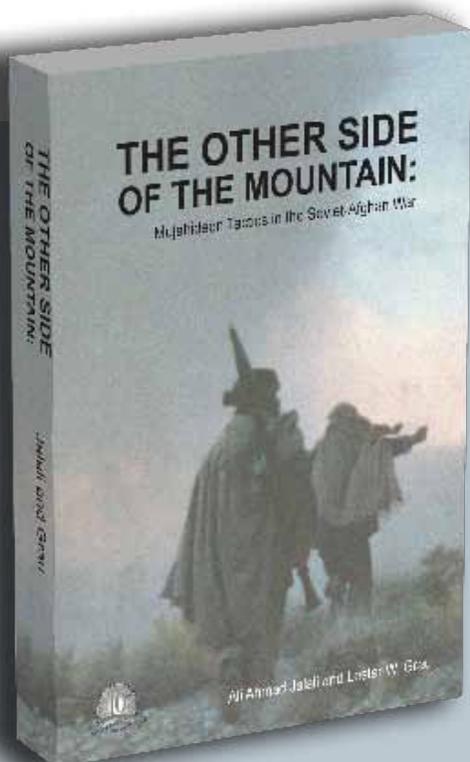
Whether the lifting of the ban will engender greater security or worsen an otherwise improving situation is yet to be seen. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)**

“The Government in Mogadishu is a new administration, it hasn’t passed Mogadishu. There isn’t a national military that operates in all of Somalia; Jubaland, Puntland, Baidoa and Somaliland have their own military forces,” said Omar.

The Minister stated that the arms embargo lift for the SFG could cause insecurity in other regions in Somalia.

“The [arms embargo lift] has to be equally administered and the regions and states need to take part in the process. But the Mogadishu administration is in its infancy and hasn’t gained the affirmation of the other regions,” stated Minister Omar.

Last month, Puntland stated that an arms embargo lift could carry serious implications for Somalia if measures are not taken to ensure proper use.



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

It is on the reading list of many senior officers and in the rucksacks of deploying soldiers.

Iran's Proxy Strategy in Nigeria

21 February 2013

OE Watch Commentary: Since Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has cultivated a Shia community in Nigeria from almost no members in 1979 to a community of about four million people (5% of Nigerian Muslims) today. Iran's goals have been not only to proselytize, but also to generate anti-American and anti-Israel sentiment by financing the Shia community's leader, shaykh Ibrahim Zakzaky. According to the Pew Research Global Attitudes Project, Nigerian Muslims have the third most favorable view of Hizbollah (45%) in the world after only Lebanon and Jordan. Nigerian Muslims also favor al-Qaeda (49%) more than Muslims in any other country in the world. Zakzaky-led demonstrations, where Iranian leaders Khomeini and Khameini and Hizbollah leader Nasrallah portraits are revered while American and Israeli flags are burned, are commonplace. Zakzaky often makes hate-filled public statements against America, such as when he blamed the U.S. – not Boko Haram – for blowing up the UN Headquarters in Abuja on 26 August 2011.

Iran's use of Nigeria's Shia community as a proxy to plan attacks against American and Israeli targets is only now coming to light. The accompanying THISDAY article describes the arrest of three Nigerian Shias (one still remains at large), who were trained in Iran and Dubai to attack U.S. and Israel government and civilian targets in Lagos. It is unclear what the trigger for an attack would have been, but a BBC interview with Zakzaky in May 2012 may provide some answers. He said if Iran were attacked by the U.S. or Israel the impact would be felt "not only in Nigeria, but the entire world... How much the impact would it be would depend on which areas were attacked." Zakzaky's following, which is modeled

“His Iranian sponsors requested that he identify and gather intelligence on public and prominent hotels frequented by Americans and Israelis to facilitate attacks.”



Shaykh Ibrahim Zakzaky (far right) visiting Shia leaders during a visit to the shrine of Ameril Muslemeen [Commander of the Faithful] in Najaf, Iraq in December 2012., via <http://www.islamicinvitationturkey.com/2012/12/16/photo-sheikh-zakzakys-visit-to-najaf-in-novemeber-2012/>

Source: Akinsuyi, Yemi. "Iran Linked to Terrorist Plot to Kill IBB, Dasuki," ThisDay, 21 February 2013. <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/iran-linked-to-terrorist-plot-to-kill-ibb-dasuki/140128/>

Original Article (excerpted)

Iran Linked to Terrorist Plot to Kill IBB, Dasuki

Three persons, including the leader of an Islamic sect based in Ilorin, Kwara State, are in the custody of the Department of State Security Services (SSS) over a plot to assassinate former military president, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. Other targets of the group included a former Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, who is the father of the National Security Adviser (NSA), Col. Sambo Dasuki (rtd), as well as American and Israelis targets in Nigeria.

The leader of the group, Abdullahi Mustapha Berende, and two others were paraded yesterday in Abuja by the SSS. The fourth member of the group is on the run. The Islamic leader, along with three of his accomplices, were said to be collaborating with some unnamed Iranians, known to be operating a high profile international terrorist network, to carry out the killings. The suspects were also said to have been plotting

Continued: Iran's Proxy Strategy in Nigeria

after Hizbollah and known as the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), does not appear to have guided this cell directly, but Zakzaky's close connections to Iran make it likely that he knows the full range of Iranian activities in the Nigerian Shia community.

*Since 2012 Iranian-sponsored terrorist cells around the world, trained like this cell, have carried out attacks on Israeli targets in Thailand, India, and Bulgaria and been uncovered in Cyprus, Azerbaijan and Kenya. The Nigerian cell differs from most of the other cells because, in addition to its focus on both Israeli and U.S. targets, it was also planning attacks on leaders in its own country who, "if attacked, could unsettle the West." With the increase of Iranian activities in Nigeria and other African countries, from illegal arms sales to searching for uranium sources in Zimbabwe and Namibia, Iran's ability to enlist local special groups capable of carrying out its larger global proxy strategy may also increase. Nigeria will remain uniquely suitable for Iran, since Zakzaky's movement generates tens of thousands of Nigerian Shias who are loyal to Iran's theocratic regime. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)***

***Note:** A short biography of Shaykh Ibrahim Zakzaky is available at the Islamic Movement in Nigeria's official website (http://www.islamicmovement.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=108&Itemid=142):*

To read a publication by Michael Eisenstadt on "The Strategic Culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Operational and Policy Implications," which discusses Iran's 'special groups' proxies in the Middle East, please see: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-strategic-culture-of-the-islamic-republic-of-iran-operational-and-polic>

against and spying on Americans, Israelis and some other Western countries' interests in the country and had plotted to attack such facilities.

Briefing reporters on the arrest of the suspects, SSS Deputy Director (Public Relations), Mrs. Marilyn Ogar, explained that for six months, the service had been on the trail of the group to determine their probable course of action and to stop them from executing their plans. According to Ogar, "It was observed that Berende was a local leader of the Shiite sect in Ilorin and was observed to have made several suspicious trips to and from Iran where he interacted with some Iranian elements known to operate a high profile international terrorist network.

In the course of interrogation, Berende confessed that in 2006, he gained admission to study a six-month course in Modern Shi'a Islamic Teaching (Da'awa) at Imam Khomeini University, Iran. "He was recruited by some Iranian elements when he returned to Iran for further studies in 2011 and was subsequently trained on the use of AK-47 assault rifle, pistols, production and detonation of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). "After he returned to Nigeria, he was invited by his handlers to Dubai for further briefing in April 2012 and was tasked to establish a terrorist cell in the South-western part of Nigeria with a particular emphasis on Lagos.

His Iranian sponsors requested that he identify and gather intelligence on public and prominent hotels frequented by Americans and Israelis to facilitate attacks. He was also to provide specific details on the following targets: USAID, Max, Zim Intercontinental Shipping Company, A. A. Consulting, Peace Corps and Jewish Cultural Centre (Chabad) in Lagos. "He was tasked to provide the names of prominent Nigerians who if attacked could unsettle the West and he gave the names of Ibrahim Babangida and Ibrahim Dasuki as targets of attack to his Iranian handlers." She added that Berende had taken photographs of the Israeli Cultural Centre in Ikoyi, Lagos that he had sent to his handlers and was given \$24,000 and 3,500 euro to facilitate his trips to Iran, establish petty business, which would serve as decoy, and to relocate his family from Ilorin to Lagos.

The Emergence of Self-Defense Groups in Mexico

3 March 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *The inability of authorities to reduce violence generated by organized crime groups has prompted the rapid creation and spread of civil self-defense groups in Mexico. One of the first such groups emerged in Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero, during January 2013. Weeks following the emergence of this group, an estimated 36 civil self-defense groups emerged in Oaxaca, Chihuahua, Morelos, Mexico State, Guerrero, Jalisco, Veracruz, Michoacan, Sonora, and Quintana Roo.*

Community police forces run by the local populace have been operational in mountainous regions within Guerrero since 1995. Emerging civil self-defense groups share two traits with community police forces: first, the vast majority of civil self-defense group members are from indigenous tribes; second, the customs and traditions of civil self-defense groups are based on the security and justice system implemented within indigenous tribes.

Supporters of community police claim that their justice system is more effective than that of the traditional government. Opponents argue that although newly emerging groups attempt to mimic existing community police forces, most of them are dangerous because their ranks comprise armed but untrained farm workers who do not have solidified codes of justice. Furthermore, the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) indicated that self-defense groups are problematic in that they are similar to paramilitary groups.

Mexico's Secretary of the Interior



Member of a Mexican Indigenous Self (Auto) Defense Group operating in Guerrero State, via <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/89728.html>

Source: Najar, Alberto. "El riesgo de la justicia popular en México," *Expresionlibre*, <http://www.expresionlibre.org/main/nacional/el-riesgo-de-la-justicia-popular-en-mexico>; accessed on 02 March 2013

Civil Self-Defense Groups in Guerrero

Civil self-defense groups are operational in at least 20 communities within Acapulco and Coyuca de Benitez, Guerrero. Aims of these groups are to fight insecurity and to protect their communities. In Brasilia, a community within the Coyuca de Benitez municipality, representatives from at least 20 civil self-defense groups meet to discuss strategies to enhance security in the Costa Grande region. Currently, the following communities are working together to enhance security in the Costa Grande region:

- Ocotillo
- Ejido Viejo
- Las Lomitas
- El Terrero
- Tepetixtla
- Brasilia
- Tecomapa
- Loma del Aire
- Las Lomitas
- Tepetixtla
- El Pelillo
- San Pedro las Playas
- Huertecilla
- Los Nopales
- Barrio Nuevo

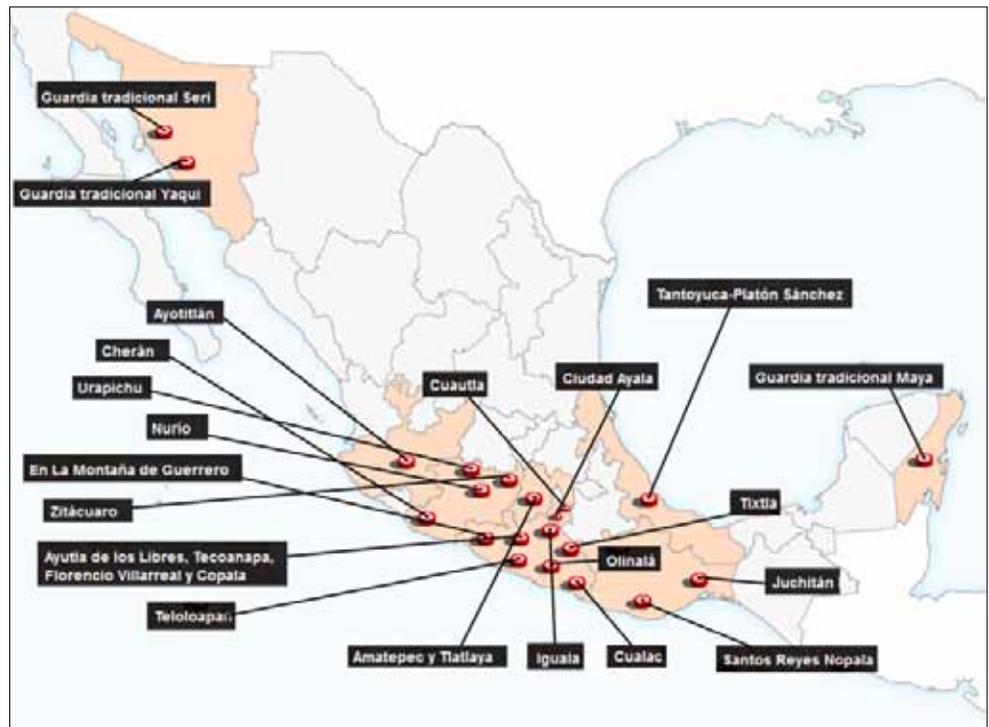
Existent civil self-defense groups hope to extend into 60 additional communities within Guerrero.

(continued)

Continued: The Emergence of Self-Defense Groups in Mexico

Miguel Angel Osorio Chong reported that the government is working on legalizing select self-defense groups to prevent excessive unlawful acts. Experts claim that legalizing self-defense groups could perpetuate disastrous results, as was the case in Colombia. Others, such as investigator Teresa Sierra, argue that, contrary to Colombian self-defense groups, Mexican self-defense groups are composed of indigenous peoples whose cultural roots and beliefs will prevent them from committing radical acts.

Although civil self-defense groups are a relatively new phenomenon in Mexico, it is likely that this is just the beginning. As violence in the country continues to proliferate, citizens will continue to take matters into their own hands to protect their families and communities. This may cause issues with law enforcement agencies attempting to control security in areas in which civil self-defense groups are operating. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel and Gonzalez)**



Map indicating the presence of various Self (Auto) Defense groups throughout Mexico, via http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/graficos/graficosanimados13/EU-Radiografia-Autodefensa/mapa_mexico.html

Civil Self-Defense Groups in Michoacan:

On 24 February 2013, civil self-defense groups set up multiple checkpoints in Buenavista, Tepalcatepec, and La Ruana, Michoacán. These cities are located in the Tierra Caliente region of the state which is characterized by high levels of violence due to the presence of drug trafficking organizations.

Civil Self-Defense Groups in Mexico

The graphic above depicts the geographic locations of select civil self-defense groups operating in Mexico, while details about these organizations can be accessed below:

Oaxaca:

- Santos Reyes Nopala: the self-defense groups operating in this municipality have been discredited given that its leader is said to have ties with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)
- Juchitan: community police in this municipality oppose the creation of wind towers by ecologists

Guerrero:

- Tixtla: individuals from four separate communities comprise civil self-defense groups in this municipality. The same group receives support from another civil self-defense group known as the Regional Coordinator of Community Authorities – Community Police (CRAC-PC).

(continued)

Continued: The Emergence of Self-Defense Groups in Mexico

- Ayutla de los Libres, Teconapa, Floriencio Villarreal, and Copala: civil self-defense groups became operational in the aforementioned municipalities in December 2012. One of the groups operating within these municipalities is UPOEG; a Community Police force that is led by Bruno Placido. Since their inception, UPOEG officers have arrested 54 individuals accused of kidnapping, murder, and extortion. The now detained individuals are being sentenced before a people's court.
- Telolopan: civil self-defense groups operating in this municipality are urging the federal government to set up additional military checkpoints
- Iguala: civil self-defense groups in this municipality are demanding that the government provide additional security measures in at least 30 communities
- Cualac: citizens created a community police force in February 2013
- Olinala: between October and December 2012, civil self-defense groups implemented multiple checkpoints in Olinala
- Mountainous areas within Guerrero: The CRAC-PC has presence within 75 communities and 13 municipalities

Michoacan:

- Zitacuaro: the civil self-defense group operating in this municipality is demanding legal recognition from the state
- Cheran: a civil self-defense group was created in this municipality to protect the logging industry
- Urapichu: the civil self-defense group operating in this municipality is comprised of indigenous persons from eight separate Purepecha communities
- Nurio: civil self-defense groups emerged in this municipality in 2008

Mexico State:

- Amatepec and Tlatlaya: civil self-defense groups were created at the insistence of the Francisco Villa Campesino Front

Sonora:

- Guardia Traditional Seri: this civil self-defense group operates out of Punta Chueca which is located approximately 30 km from the Bahia de Kino. It was created to protect fishermen.
- Guardia Traditional Yaqui: this civil self-defense group operates out of the Valle del Yaqui region and is comprised of citizens from four separate municipalities who are opposed to the construction of an independent aqueduct

Quintana Roo:

- Guardia Traditional Maya: this self-defense group is active in the Felipe Carrillo Puerto municipality

Jalisco:

- Ayotitlan: civil self-defense groups from the Manaltan community are demanding recognition of community police force from the state government

Veracruz:

- Tantoyuca-Platon Sanchez: civil self-defense groups emerged in February 2012

Death of a King and the Future of an Insurgency

1 January 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *It has been a while since we were not obliged to ponder Hugo Chavez' health. Numerous other matters, including the balance of the Mexican drug war, maturation of Brazilian war industries, and/or the Foro of Sao Paulo's increasing weight within formal international organizations might interest regional specialists, but the headline issues for the remainder of 2013 (unless the Castro brothers follow Chavez' lead) will be Venezuelan stability and the FARC peace talks. How these unfold could impel near-term changes in US policies and DoD resource allocations. The Colombian peace process will be of additional interest to military instructors, planners and strategists as an example of the possibilities and potential pitfalls of amnesty plans and negotiations in irregular war. What do the sides really have to give, or feel they have to give?*

*Many Colombians recognize how difficult Chavez' Venezuela has made military victory over the FARC, given the geography of guerrilla sanctuaries. It seems that the peace process could scarcely have begun but for Chavez' personal intervention, which involved the good offices of Cuba's leaders, as well as of other members of the Foro of Sao Paulo. Public commentators ask what President Manuel Santos ceded to Chavez, and what the Chavez demise might do to the continuity of those deals. It appears to some Colombians close to the matter that the back-room deals may have much to do with land ownership, and Colombian land at that. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)***



Deceased Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez seated in front of a painting of Venezuelan South American liberator Simón Bolívar, via <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/89728.html>

Source: Natalia Springer, "Chávez y la paz de Colombia" El Tiempo 1 January 2013 online <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12288106>

...“It is, clearly, a vision of the peace [process] as a power negotiation, which goes beyond the mere renunciation of arms and submission [to the State], and understands that the conflict plays part in a complex sub-regional dynamic. For those in agreement, this peace [process] requires the political will of the neighbors.”...

Source: Jesús Antonio Petit da Costa 20 de diciembre de 2012 <http://jesuspetitdacosta.blogspot.com>

...“If the President of the Republic absents himself from the national territory and the Executive Vice-President is not called to substitute, taking the legal oath, it must be understood that there exists an ‘acephaly’ or power vacuum. There is no president in exercise [of that power]. It follows, consequently, that the vacuum will fill.”...

Source: Carlos Alberto Montaner, ‘Fidel Castro se despide de su amigo Hugo Chávez’ Libertad Digital 24 de diciembre de 2012, <http://www.libertaddigital.com/opinion/carlos-alberto-montaner/fidel-castro-se-despide-de-su-amigo-hugo-chavez-66860/>

...“Obviously, there are symptoms that the death watch over Chavez will start a serious crisis among his lieutenants. No consensus exists regarding who should be his heir or by what process lies the determination of Chavez' spawn. What everyone does know, Hatfields and McCoys, is that the country is going down a bad road.”...

Continued: Death of a King and the Future of an Insurgency

Source: Contexto Ganadero, “José Félix Lafaurie ratifica su posición frente a los diálogos de paz” Contexto Ganadero, Bogotá 28 de diciembre de 2012
<http://contextoganadero.com/ganaderia-sostenible/jose-felix-lafaurie-ratifica-su-posicion-frente-los-dialogos-de-paz>

...“Very surely because, when the State, facing its incapacity to confront the guerrilla, authorized the creation of the “Convivir” [authorized local rural militias], many ranchers, under the tutelage of the armed forces, collaborated with them [the paramilitaries] as the only means of survival. Nevertheless, the reality is that we are facing a phenomenon of massive land dispossession, and an authentic cattle genocide, committed by the FARC.”...

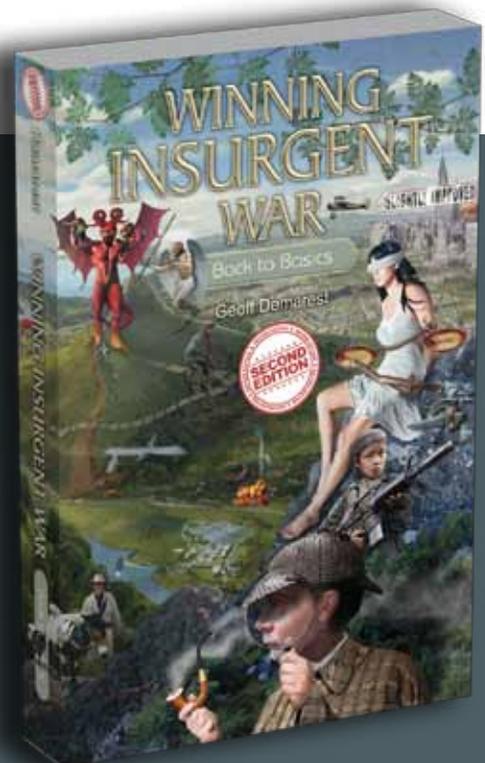


Hugo Chavez (right) seated alongside of Fidel Castro (left), via <http://www.cubadebate.cu>

Source: Communique of the FARC-EP: “Una paz mal construida es peor que una guerra” (allegedly written by the FARC peace delegation in Havana on 21 December 2012), <http://anncol.eu/index.php/colombia/insurgencia/farc-ep/comunicados-de-las-farc-ep/1137-dec-21-comunicado-farc-ep-una-paz-mal-construida-es-peor-que-una-guerra>

...“The FARC is not in a process of negotiation, given that we have nothing to offer, and indeed much to demand as part of that enormous mass of dispossessed that clamours for land, housing, health, education, bread, liberty and true democracy.”...

Geoff Demarest’s *Winning Insurgent 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.”



China's Reorganizes and Consolidates its Marine Surveillance Authority

March 2013



Image source via <http://www.defence.pk>

OE Watch Commentary: China recently announced plans to unify its maritime surveillance and control agencies under one central agency, the National Oceanic Agency (NOA). Previously, the NOA had one enforcement agency at its disposal, known as the China Marine Surveillance. After restructuring is completed the NOA will control the resources of the coast guard, fisheries law enforcement, and maritime anti-smuggling forces. Official reasoning for the restructuring includes increased bureaucratic efficiency and protection of China's maritime interests.

Policymakers in China have identified the importance of a unified decision-making body to prevent, or at least limit, the chance of interagency competition—a real concern within China's large bureaucratic system. According to observers, this competition could lead to decision making that is not sanctioned by Beijing. That said, such actions could have the potential to threaten the balance of already-tense situations between China and its neighbors over increasingly sensitive maritime border disputes..

As we see in the accompanying six articles, China is currently wrestling with increasingly contentious territorial claims within the South East Asia and

“Amid tense territorial disputes, China plans to restructure the country's top oceanic administration to enhance maritime law enforcement and better protect and utilize its marine resources.”

Source: “China vows to beef up maritime security,” China Daily, 11 January 2013, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-01/11/content_16104066.htm.

China vowed on Thursday to beef up maritime patrols and oppose sovereignty infringement by Japan over territorial islands and waters. Observers said Beijing should further bolster maritime governance to protect lawful rights and interests, and push the adversaries of relevant territorial disputes back to the table for a resolution through bilateral reconciliation.

...Li Guoqiang, deputy director of the Center for Chinese Borderland History and Geography at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said China is still lagging behind regional maritime players in infrastructure, law enforcement capabilities, patrolling facilities and staff.

...“A larger budget and other supports will be dedicated to fishery administration, maritime surveillance and the coast guard to boost China's efforts to become a maritime power,” Li Guoqiang said.

Maritime security was highlighted in the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which emphasized that the country will become “a maritime power”.

...Li suggested that a national strategy for maritime jurisdiction be designed as soon as possible to clarify the rights, goals and tasks of China's administration.”

(continued)

Continued: China's Reorganizes and Consolidates its Marine Surveillance Authority

East Asia Seas, including those of several South East Asian nations and Japan. In January the Communist Party announced a major policy decision to boost maritime surveillance and power projection around its shores. Since the announcement of consolidating its maritime authorities, China sent a marine surveillance fleet with helicopters to survey waters in the South East Asian Sea. Shortly afterwards Japan announced its dismay over the sale of a French helicopter-landing device to China, citing concerns that the increased land-sea-air capability could induce China to land on contested territories - a move that is largely seen as unacceptable in Japan.

*While a consolidated Chinese marine authority is welcome by many policymakers as prevention against unintended conflict escalation, it remains to be seen if other countries with interests in waters surrounding China will welcome the increased decision-making power and resources of the newly consolidated NOA. **End OE Watch Commentary (Faruolo)***

“Amid tense territorial disputes, China plans to restructure the country’s top oceanic administration to enhance maritime law enforcement and better protect and utilize its marine resources.”

Source: “China to regroup marine bodies to safeguard rights,” Xinhua News, 10 March 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-03/10/c_132223145.htm.

The move will bring China’s maritime law enforcement forces, currently scattered among different ministries, under the unified management of a single administration, according to a report delivered by State Councilor Ma Kai at the annual parliamentary session on Sunday.

The new agency will still be named the National Oceanic Administration (NOA). It will have under its control the coast guard forces of the Public Security Ministry, the fisheries law enforcement command of the Agriculture Ministry and the maritime anti-smuggling police of the General Administration of Customs, Ma said in his report about the plan on the institutional restructuring and functional transformation of the State Council, China’s cabinet.

The NOA currently has only one maritime law enforcement department, China Marine Surveillance.

Ma said the move is aimed at solving problems related to inefficient maritime law enforcement, improving the protection and utilization of oceanic resources and better safeguarding the country’s maritime rights and interests.

The proposed administration, administered by the Ministry of Land and Resources, will carry out law enforcement activities in the name of China’s maritime police bureau and under the operational direction of the Ministry of Public Security, said Ma, who is also the secretary-general of the State Council.

In addition to law enforcement, other functions of the new administration include outlining the oceanic development plan, supervising and managing the use of sea waters, and protecting ocean ecology, Ma said.

A high-level consultative and coordinating body, the National Oceanic Commission, will also be set up to formulate oceanic development strategies and coordinate important oceanic affairs, Ma said.

The tasks of the commission will be carried out by the new NOA.

Experts say the adjustment is a “top design” made at a time when China is striving to build up its maritime strength to boost its marine economy and safeguard its maritime rights amid territorial disputes with neighboring countries.

... “The more developed the ocean economy is, the more important it is to safeguard rights at sea,” said Wang.

The disputes over China’s islands in the South China Sea and East China Sea, as well as some countries’ illegal exploitation of resources in China’s maritime territories, have made it crucial to integrate the country’s maritime law enforcement capacities in order to guarantee territorial sovereignty and economic interests.

“China needs a more powerful, higher-level entity to integrate resource management and provide systematic services, whether it is to develop the maritime economy or safeguard rights and interests at sea,” Wang said.

(continued)

Continued: China's Reorganizes and Consolidates its Marine Surveillance Authority

Zhong Wen, a political advisor from south China's island province of Hainan, said China's emphasis on the protection of maritime rights has been lifted to an "unprecedented high."

Zhong said overlapping obligations and management duties among multiple marine authorities have impeded China's oceanic development.

"It is imperative to set up a comprehensive and unified maritime management entity that is highly efficient," Zhong said.

Wang, however, noted that the regrouping is not aimed at quantitative changes, but at forming synergies.

He also pointed out that the move is not to pursue marine hegemony, nor is it meant as a threat to other countries..."

Source: "Nation merging maritime patrol forces," China Daily, 11 March 2013, http://www.china.org.cn/china/NPC_CPPCC_2013/2013-03/11/content_28199656.htm

"China's top oceanic administration will be restructured in a move to strengthen maritime law enforcement and better protect marine resources amid tense territorial disputes with neighboring countries.

The plan, which was unveiled on Sunday, will put China's maritime law enforcement forces, currently scattered over multiple ministries, under a single administration, State Councilor Ma Kai said at the annual session of the top legislature.

...Experts said the restructuring addresses China's urgent concerns to secure and utilize its marine resources and protect its waters..."

Source: "Maritime law enforcement restructured amid island disputes," Macau Daily Times, 11 March 2013, <http://www.macaudailytimes.com.mo/china/42158-maritime-law-enforcement-restructured-amid-island-disputes.html>



Chinese State Councilor Ma Kai, via <http://news.xinhuanet.com>

"...The decision signals that China wants to better organize its maritime assets as it wrangles with Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam in territorial disputes. The U.S. has expressed concern that an accident or miscommunication could lead that sparring to escalate further.

... Chinese law enforcement vessels have conducted numerous patrols this year around the islands, known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China. That's fueled questions about the government's intentions, U.S. Pacific Commander Admiral Samuel Locklear told the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee last Tuesday.

"I am particularly concerned that the activities around the Senkaku Islands could lead to an accident and miscalculation and escalation between China and Japan," Locklear said. "The close proximity of ships and aircraft from all sides of these disputes raises the risks of escalation."

In July, Vietnam protested China's plans to set up a military garrison on a disputed island in the South China Sea. The Philippines in January sought United Nations arbitration over China's assertion of sovereignty over the Spratly Islands.

Hours after the maritime reorganization was announced yesterday, the official Xinhua News Agency reported that three Chinese Marine Surveillance Ships had begun a joint ship-helicopter patrol in the South China Sea..."

(continued)

Continued: China's Reorganizes and Consolidates its Marine Surveillance Authority

Source: "China deploys chopper along with ships to patrol S China Sea," The Indian Express, 10 March 2013, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/china-deploys-chopper-along-with-ships-to-patrol-s-china-sea/1085972>

"China for the first time deployed a marine surveillance unit with a helicopter to carry out patrolling and observation missions near the contested islands in the South China Sea.

Three China Marine Surveillance (CMS) ships departed from the port of newly created Sansha City today.

The fleet will be joined by the Haijian B-7103 helicopter as they patrol the waters for nine days, said Zhang Weijian, the on-site director of the mission.

Zhang said the detachment will start by patrolling 10 islands and reefs today, while law enforcement personnel on the ships will land on the islands of Zhaoshu and Beidao..."

Source: "Japan fears French copter device may aid China's Senkaku campaign," The Asahi Shimbun, 18 March 2013, <http://ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/china/AJ201303180096>.

"Japan and France are at odds over a French company's sales to China of a cutting-edge helicopter landing system that Japan fears will be deployed around the Senkaku Islands.

At issue is French defense contractor DCNS SA's landing grid, which allows helicopters to land on or take off from a ship without crew assistance even in bad weather.

Japan expressed its concerns to France that the equipment will be used on Chinese ships intruding into Japanese waters around the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, sources said.

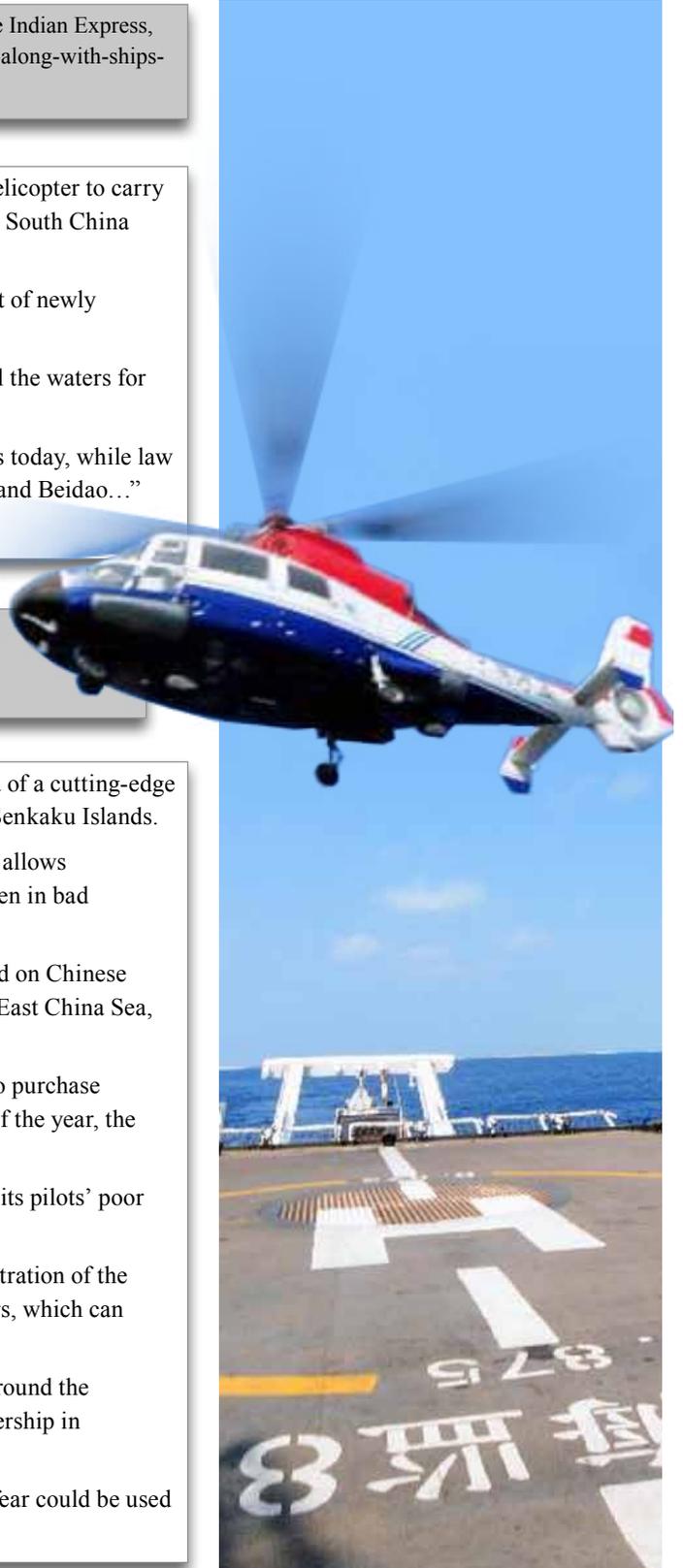
... Japan has learned that the Chinese government signed a contract to purchase the equipment to install it on two marine surveillance ships by the end of the year, the sources said.

According to a government source, China will be able to make up for its pilots' poor helicopter landing techniques with the system.

The government is worried that China could threaten Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands by strengthening its maritime activities with helicopters, which can monitor larger areas than marine surveillance ships.

Chinese government ships have repeatedly entered Japanese waters around the uninhabited islands since Japan put three of the islands under state ownership in September.

Some of these ships are capable of carrying helicopters, which some fear could be used to violate Japanese airspace or even help Chinese land on the islands..."



What the Chinese Press says about Xi Jinping's Intentions to Strengthen the Military: Nothing Surprising on the One Hand... 14 March 2013

“...fully and clearly understand that obeying the party's orders is the soul, being able to win in war is the core...”

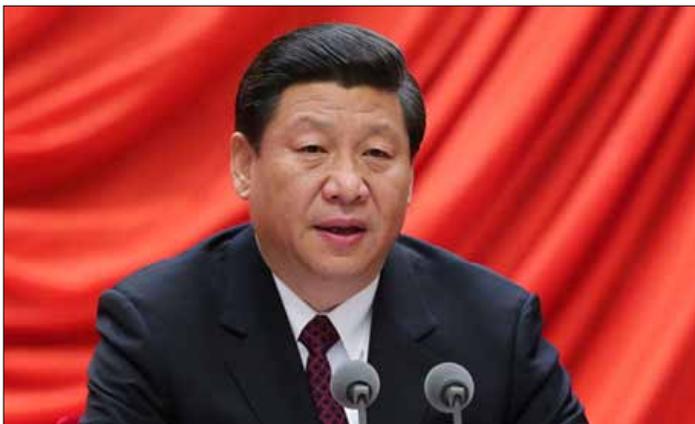
OE Watch Commentary: On 14 March Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, was elected president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission. The following three articles offer a look at Xi's priorities for China.

The first article is interesting in that it offers a lengthy and detailed account of the new leader's background, from his youth to his assuming the role of president of the PRC. Xi is portrayed as a team-building, compassionate, respectful, wise, and driven leader. He is also emotionally tied to the country's military.

The last two articles focus on the desire to strengthen the country's military. Xi envisions a raised level of national defense and armed forces built up to a new level. During the plenary meeting of the PLA delegation to the First Session of the 12th National Party Congress (NPC) on 11 January, Xi is quoted to have said, "Building a military force of the people that obeys the party's orders, is able to win battles, and keeps a good style is the party's goal of strengthening the military under the new situation."

Not long after Xi's speech, the PLA General Political Department issued a circular, requiring that all PLA and Armed Police units "seriously study and implement Chairman Xi's important speech at the plenary meeting of the PLA delegation to the first session of the 12th NPC."

China's military modernization has been ongoing, often raising concern. Judging by Xi's comments and the PLA General Political Department's push to study and implement his ideas, the country's military expansion is not likely to slow any time soon. It would not be surprising even to see it increase. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**



Xi Jinping Photograph: Ding Lin/Xinhua/Corbis, via <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

Source: “人民群众是我们力量的源泉”——记中共中央总书记习近平” (The People are the Source of Our Strength – A Record of CPC Central Committee General Secretary Xi Jinping,” Xinhua Asia-Pacific Service (Chinese), December 23, 2012, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2012-12/25/c_114148683.htm>

The People are the Source of Our Strength – A Record of CPC Central Committee General Secretary Xi Jinping

In his first public speech since being elected general secretary, Xi Jinping clearly vowed his firm resolution to lead the CPC in governing on behalf of the people

After assuming office, while viewing an exhibit entitled The Path to Revival with other members of the Standing Committee of the CPC Central Political Bureau, he said: “Currently, everyone is discussing the Chinese dream. In my opinion, achieving a magnificent renaissance of the Chinese nation is the most magnificent dream of the Chinese nation in recent times.”

--In economic construction, we must adhere to development as the bottom line, but we must not encourage blind, honey-dry development. We must adhere to scientific development, and must not engage in development based on resource competition, development that exhausts resources, or empty development like moving piles of bricks back and forth.

--In political construction, we must adhere to the idea that all state power belongs to the people, actively stabilize and promote reform of the political system [ti zhi], and unswervingly follow the political development path of

Continued: What the Chinese Press says about Xi Jinping's Intentions to Strengthen the Military: Nothing Surprising on the One Hand....

socialism with Chinese characteristics. We must abide by the principles of the Constitution, promote the spirit of the Constitution, carry out the missions of the Constitution, adhere to ruling the nation under law, and govern according to the Constitution.

-- In cultural construction, we must stress developing talented personnel and pay attention to cultivating the national spirit. In particular, we must promote, "using our sweat and blood to build a new Great Wall" in the spirit of the national anthem.

-- In social construction, we must base ourselves upon the basic national situation of the initial stage of socialism. On a foundation of economic development, we must constantly support and improve the people's livelihood, establish correct concepts of prosperity, strengthen the concept of using diligent labor to create happy lives, and work in concert to build a harmonious society.

The destiny of Xi Jinping is inextricably tied up with that of the military. In his early years, he worked three years at the General Office of the Central Military Commission, during which time he formed deep emotional ties to the military... He is highly familiar with the situation of the military. He protects and cherishes the military and has actively supported it in resolving many practical difficulties. After serving as vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, he actively participated in the work of leading national defense and military construction. At the First Plenary Session of the 18th CPC National Congress, he assumed the post of chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission.

Xi Jinping is concerned about Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao...

Since assuming the post of general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, Xi Jinping has declared his resolve to conduct reform on many occasions. He has actively advocated emancipating the mind and expanding innovation...

Xi Jinping believes that as a leader, one must both base oneself on the present and focus on the long term. One must be willing to conduct preparatory work, take on matters that have not yet come to fruition, and adopt a correct political achievement perspective. One must possess a state of mind such that "I do not have to be the one who succeeds." One must "not covet all the credit, and not seek all the fame." One must "draw complete blueprints" and "do things again and again."

Source: Cao Zhi, Li Xuanliang, "习近平在解放军代表团全体会议上强调 牢牢把握党在新形势下的强军目标"(Xi Jinping Stresses the Goal of Military Strengthening at the plenary meeting of the PLA Delegation), Xinhua News Agency (Chinese), March 12, 2013, <http://www.hb.xinhuanet.com/2013-03/12/c_114986761.htm>

Xi Jinping Stresses the Goal of Military Strengthening at the plenary meeting of the PLA Delegation

When attending the plenary meeting of the PLA delegation to the First Session of the 12th NPC on 11 January, Xi Jinping... emphasized that all PLA forces should deeply implement the spirit of the 18th CPC National Congress, hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, follow the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thinking of the "Three Represents", the scientific development concept, firmly grasp the party's objective of military strengthening under the new situation, comprehensively enhance the revolutionary character and elevate the modernization and regularization level of the armed forces, endeavor to build a military force of the people that obeys the party's orders, is able to win battles, and keeps a good style.

Xi Jinping... pointed out: Building a military force of the people that obeys the party's orders, is able to win battles, and keeps a good style is the party's goal of strengthening the military under the new situation. Obeying the party's orders is the soul, which determines the political direction of the armed forces; being able to win battles is the core, which embodies the fundamental function of the armed forces and the fundamental direction of force building; a good style is the guarantee, concerning the character, the fundamental purpose, and the inherent qualities of the armed forces. All PLA forces should accurately grasp this military strengthening goal for directing the building and reform of the military units and directing the military struggle preparations, strive to raise national defense and armed forces building to a new level...

Xi Jinping pointed out: It is necessary to coordinate economic development and national defense building, strive to effect the unification of enriching the nation and strengthening the military...

Continued: What the Chinese Press says about Xi Jinping's Intentions to Strengthen the Military: Nothing Surprising on the One Hand...

Source: “总政发出通知要求全军和武警部队 认真学习贯彻习主席在十二届全国人大一次会议解放军代表团全体会议上的重要讲话” (PLA General Political Department Issues a Circular Requiring all PLA and Armed Police units to Seriously Study and Implement Chairman Xi's Important Speech at the Plenary Meeting of the PLA Delegation to the First Session of the 12th NPC), Xinhua (Chinese), March 12, 2013, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-03/12/c_115000194.htm>.

PLA General Political Department Issues a Circular Requiring all PLA and Armed Police units to Seriously Study and Implement Chairman Xi's Important Speech at the Plenary Meeting of the PLA Delegation to the First Session of the 12th NPC

On 11 March, Chairman Xi made an important speech at the plenary meeting of the PLA delegation to the first session of the 12th NPC. ... that is, why to strengthen the military under the new situation, what to be the goal of military strengthening, how to take the path of military strengthening with Chinese characteristics. The speech is of great long-term political, strategic guiding significance for the handling of specific issues of great importance.

... it is necessary to deeply understand the important status and role of national defense and armed forces building in the fulfillment of the “China dream”, fully and clearly realize the opportunity and the challenges that our country's security and development is facing, keep a stronger sense of mission and responsibility for more quickly pushing forward the process of national defense and military modernization, provide strong power guarantee for the fulfillment of the “China dream” by doing down-to-earth work, stepping up efforts, and quickening progress. It is necessary to deeply understand that the party's goal of military strengthening under the new situation is to build a military force of the people that obeys the party's orders, is able to win in war, and keeps a good behavioral style; fully and clearly understand that obeying the party's orders is the soul, being able to win in war is the core...

Military units at all levels should place great stress on the study and implementation of Chairman Xi's important speech...



Xi Jinping, via http://www.hb.xinhuanet.com/2013-03/12/c_114986761.htm

...and on the Other Hand, the Military Policies of China's New Regime: from 'Peaceful Rise' to 'Able to Fight, Able to Win'

6 March 2013

“China’s notion of military transparency and America’s are not the same. American transparency is a form of intimidation and deterrence; however, Chinese military transparency is directed at our citizens, part of our continual progress towards a modern system of rule by law. China’s degree of military transparency is measured not merely by the amount of publicly available military information, but by the transparency of our strategic intentions.”

OE Watch Commentary: *On the heels of the first plenary session of the Twelfth National People’s Congress, a Xinhua State News Agency reporter interviewed Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo, a delegate to the Congress and Director of the Navy’s Informatization Experts Committee. In the interview, excerpted below, Yin spoke at length about Western criticisms of Chinese military transparency, and the military priorities of China’s newly elected government.*

Much ink has been spilled in the Western press over the fact that China’s military budget is not just expanding, but expanding as a proportion of China’s GDP, which itself has been climbing, uninterruptedly, for the last several decades. Yin defended this proportional expansion as necessary to make up for the first two decades of Chinese economic growth, when the military’s budget did not keep pace with the expansion of the GDP. While this may be accurate, it points to a regime that is unapologetic in its desire to cultivate a major military force. A lack of previous budget expansion indicates that, during the early days of liberal economic reform, the Chinese did not see a strong military as absolutely central to their goals of economic development or their ability to achieve these goals. A determination to make up for this period of lost – or rather, non-maximized –



Rear Admiral and NPC Delegate Yin Zhuo, Via <http://www.chinanews.com>

Source: “Yin Zhuo: Zhongguo Junfei Zengchang Hen Heli” (Yin Zhuo: China’s Military Budget Expansion is Completely Reasonable) Huangqiu Shibao (Global Times – China) 06 March 2013 http://opinion.huanqiu.com/opinion_world/2013-03/3705410.html

Article:

Xinhua Reporter: What do you make of the increases in Chinese military spending?
Member of the Twelfth National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and Director of the Informatization Experts Committee of the Navy of the People’s Liberation Army Rear, Admiral Yin Zhuo: China’s military spending has been expanding reasonably, and its current expansion is simply an adjustment made for the sake of recovery. From the 80s to the 90s China’s military spending was unbalanced, low [in comparison to China’s expanding GDP]. From the beginning of China’s Tenth Five-year Plan [2001-2005], military spending

Continued:....and on the Other Hand, the Military Policies of China's New Regime: from 'Peaceful Rise' to 'Able to Fight, Able to Win'

military growth indicates that the current regime, in contrast, views military expansion and modernization as central to its economic and political goals, and potentially indicates increased political clout for the People's Liberation Army.

Yin defended China's record of military transparency, arguing that the very concept of transparency has a different meaning in China than in the US. According to Yin, while the US relies on transparency to make clear their ability to project force as a means of intimidation and deterrence, the Chinese are primarily concerned with domestic transparency. This alludes to an increased focus on domestic approval of Chinese military spending and goals at a time when the Chinese government is increasingly concerned with overall domestic perceptions of political transparency. This is a direct result of technology's expanding role in domestic politics, in which absolute media control is no longer possible.

It should be noted that appeals to populism and nationalism, while increasingly slippery in this new technological era, are common at times of transition and insecurity, and should not necessarily be interpreted in terms of a long-term policy shift. Nonetheless, the article makes reference to newly appointed President (and Chairman of the Central Military Commission) Xi Jinping's recently debuted military policy slogan, "Able to fight, able to win." In light of the outgoing administration's much ballyhooed commitment to a "peaceful rise," Yin assured readers that President Xi's words "should not be misinterpreted as bellicose rhetoric replacing previously peaceful rhetoric." Rather, Yin referenced Chinese history in arguing that greater military

accounted for between 1.2 percent and 1.3 percent of GDP, while in the Twelfth Five-year Plan [2011-2015] spending now amounts to between 1.6 percent and 1.8 percent of GDP. Meanwhile, in America over the past 15 years, military spending has amounted to between 4.5 and 4.8 percent of GDP. England, France and other EU countries spend between 2.6 and 3.5 percent of GDP, while India spends around 3 percent of GDP on military funding annually.

China's economy has been developing relatively quickly, and factoring in inflation, double-digit growth in military spending is quite reasonable. Moreover, developing modern equipment, the informatization of our forces and other high-technology needs, training and cultivating personnel, these are all significant components of the budget increase. The West's attacks on China's military budget as opaque are unfounded. In reality, military spending can have no perfect transparency, nor could it ever be truly opaque for that matter; in the end, the realities of military spending will always be relatively clear. Of course, the structure of every nation's military budget has its own intrinsic specificities and special methods of accounting.

Reporter: China's military transparency has ceaselessly improved. For example, China has made public, for the first time, the numerical designation of all its Army Groups [equivalent to an Army or Corps in the US], and has taken the initiative to publicize new issues related to technology and defense. What signal is the military trying to send?

Yin Zhuo: As a part of China's comprehensive rise, its defense capabilities and forces are naturally expanding. In order to cope with the profound changes in the international environment, China's military is gradually moving towards transparency, and as such the great progress China is making towards modernization in the sphere of military technology is now unfolding before our eyes. Our resolution to protect national safety means we are developing a formidable defense force, and this is clear.

China's notion of military transparency and America's are not the same. American transparency is a form of intimidation and deterrence; however, Chinese military transparency is directed at our citizens, part of our continual progress towards a modern system of rule by law. China's degree of military transparency is measured not merely by the amount of publicly available military information, but by the transparency of our strategic intentions. China's strategic defense priorities and anti-hegemonic stance have never been equivocal. This is due to our country's decisive nature. China's foreign policy, focused on peaceful self-determination, is unwavering. China will never seek hegemony.

Reporter: How do you respond to Western nations ceaselessly taking any excuse to play up "China-military-threat theory?"

Yin Zhuo: The expansion of China's military capabilities, while in line with the development of our economy, is also aimed at safeguarding China's territorial integrity. Since the Opium Wars began in 1840, China has suffered from bullying in the form of "gunboat diplomacy" practiced by the great powers. "Do not do unto others as you would not wish done unto you." From the beginning, China has always insisted on a defensive strategy, and this has always been the goal of the building of China's defense capabilities, to ensure the ability to use appropriate force as ensured by international

Continued:....and on the Other Hand, the Military Policies of China's New Regime: from 'Peaceful Rise' to 'Able to Fight, Able to Win'

*preparedness was necessary to ensure peace, in the form of a China that is too powerful to be attacked. While this was framed as the natural extension of a defensive-minded, pacifist policy, paired with repeated declarations that China has no hegemonic aims, it can also be read as a declaration of strategic, political and military self-confidence and assertiveness. The interview further stoked nationalism with several references to the Opium Wars, causally [if somewhat incorrectly] conflating China's current economic development with the expansion of its military, by contrasting the current era of "comprehensive growth" with a much lamented period of military weakness in the nineteenth century, during which China was famously exploited by colonial powers. **End OE Watch Commentary (Moskowitz)***

law. The UN Charter along with national law permits us to protect our rights and interest, and no amount of money permits another to snatch away our property and territory in the manner of the Opium Wars; of course we have no right to snatch away even one cent of anyone else's rightful property either. The development of China's military is not intended to menace anyone else and certainly will do nothing to alter China's course along the path of peaceful development, which is a fixed policy. In a few Western countries, certain people of influence [describe China's military policies] in all sorts of ways; these people have ulterior motives and their efforts are ultimately fruitless.

...

Reporter: How should we interpret [Communist Party] General Secretary [President and Central Military Commission Chairman] Xi Jinping's recently touted military policy slogan "able to fight, able to win," and his generally strict military views?

Yin Zhuo: The military's main obligations are to protect the nation and protect national interests, and to do this it needs to be able to fight and win wars. This should not be misinterpreted as bellicose rhetoric replacing previously peaceful rhetoric.

At the core of "able to fight, able to win" is a determination to strengthen the military. As history has shown, if China hopes to avoid war, then China must absolutely prepare for war. The more prepared we are for war, the more likely we are to avoid war, while conversely, the less we prepare the greater the likelihood that war will become a reality.

Not long ago, the four branches of the PLA jointly published "Guidelines for Strict Economic Management," establishing concrete rules for determining what money can be spent and what money cannot be spent, thus redressing an unhealthy tendency within the military. Squandering funds on banquets and other wasteful luxuries will ultimately hamper our ability to fight wars. The ideology of building up the nation through thrift and hard work has always been a guiding tradition for our troops, and only in this manner will we stay true to the people, setting a standard where the benefits of the people are privileged over the benefits of the individual.

Are Chinese Uighur Militants Joining The Syrian Rebellion?

18 February 2013

“China always stood with evil and tyranny in Egypt, Libya and Syria against the poor people. Hizbollah has also shown its true colors as it stood by China against the Muslims of Turkistan.”

OE Watch Commentary: The Pakistan-based anti-Chinese militant group, Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), has issued a quarterly Arabic-language online magazine called Islamic Turkistan since 2009. The elaborate magazine is likely intended to raise money and generate sympathy from Arab funders, as the people whom the TIP claims to represent, the Muslim Uighurs of Xinjiang, China, generally do not read Arabic. The magazine features articles about Xinjiang's history, the “crimes” of the Chinese Communist Party against Uighurs, Uighur “martyrs” who have been killed fighting the U.S. in Afghanistan and Pakistan or fighting China in Xinjiang, and stories about successful TIP attacks against the Chinese in Xinjiang.

The TIP is a separate group from the defunct East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), whose two founding leaders, Hasan Mehsum and Abdul Haq, were killed in a Pakistan army raid in 2003 and a reported U.S. drone strike in 2010, respectively. Another reported U.S. drone strike in May 2012 also killed the TIP leader and al-Qaeda leader for Pakistan's Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Abdul Shakoor al-Turkistani, along with 17 Pakistani Taliban militants, while they were training in North Waziristan's Shawal Valley.

China has alleged since late 2012 that Uighur militants in the TIP are being funneled into Syria by a Uighur group in Turkey to fight Bashar al-Assad's forces. If China's allegations are true, it would



The front cover of the twelfth edition of Islamic Turkistan shows two “martyrs” and a Uighur's arm covered in Chinese clothing reaching towards the Quran, via <http://azelin.files.wordpress.com>

Source: Islamic Turkistan, twelfth edition. “Uighurs Fighting in Syria (Al-Uyghureoon Yuqatiloon fee Suriya),” Shmukh al-Islam Forum, 18 February 2013. http://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/e1b8a5izb-al-islc481mc4ab-al-turkistc481nc4ab_s-turkistan-islamic-party-e2809cturkistc481n-al-islc481mc4abyah-12e280b3.pdf

Original Article (excerpted)

Uighurs Fighting in Syria (Pg. 37)

This was the title that was written in a Shia'a website called Al Manar that discussed news that was published by Global Times of China that talked about the lies of the Chinese government about the Muslims of occupied Eastern Turkistan that China occupied since 1949. China is trying to steal its resources and annihilate the people and to empty it of everything.

China did not provide one proof or a piece of evidence that the Uighurs are fighting with the rebels in Syria against Bashar al-Assad. Even if a few Uighurs went there, they

Continued: Are Chinese Uighur Militants Joining The Syrian Rebellion?

support China's claims that the TIP is not a Xinjiang separatist group like ETIM, but rather that it is part of the broader jihadist movement. On 18 February 2013 the twelfth edition of Islamic Turkistan was posted on online forums, addressing China's allegations in article called "Uighurs Fighting in Syria." The TIP said that although China did not provide evidence that Uighurs are fighting in Syria, "even if a few Uighurs went there, they were representing themselves only." The article also highlighted that "China always stood with evil and tyranny in Egypt, Libya and Syria against the poor people."

A separate article, "The Truth Has Its Banner and the Tyrants Have Their Soldiers," however, seemed to indicate the TIP was sending fighters to Syria, when it said, "How can we not aid and support [the fighters in Syria] while we see the injustice that is happening to them with our own eyes?" and "We have to let our people in Syria know that we are with them and that we have the same burdens and goals, which is raising and elevating the banner and the word of Allah." While there is still no confirmation whether Uighurs are fighting in Syria, this edition of Islamic Turkistan shows the TIP's efforts to solicit support from Arab funders by framing the TIP's cause in Xinjiang as aligned with the Arab societies that opposed Libya's Qaddafi, Egypt's Mubarak, and now Syria's al-Assad. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Note: An English-language article from China's Global Times alleging that Uighur militants are fighting in Syria can be accessed at: (<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/740936.shtml>):

only went there representing themselves only. China has used and capitalized on the events of September 11, 2001 and it tried to say that the people in occupied Turkistan support terrorism and that the East Islamic Turkistan Movement, which does not exist as well as the East Turkestan Education and Solidarity Association (ETESA), which is based in Istanbul, are associated in separatist activities.

East Turkistan is an occupied country that is called the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang and it is not a land that belongs to China as it is located outside the Great Wall of China. Their people are Muslims who come from the descendants of Uighurs who came from Turkey. The Uighur people do not look the same as the Chinese, they speak another language and they have different traditions and customs.

Since the outbreak of the Syrian revolution, China has decided to back and support Bashar al-Assad against the rebels and helped him kill the children of Syria. China used the veto three times—the veto that it only used three times since 1975. The Turkistan people are asking for their human, religious and economic rights. They have the right to determine their own destiny according to the document of the United Nations which is why China says that they are terrorists.

As for the East Turkestan Education and Solidarity Association that China says is a terrorist group with separatist activities, this organization is an educational one. It is not the right of China to make such an accusation as China always stood with evil and tyranny in Egypt, Libya and Syria against the poor people. Hizbollah has also shown its true colors as it stood by China against the Muslims of Turkistan.

The Strategic Implications of Chinese Companies Going Global

By COL Heino Klinck, U.S. Army; Edited by Cindy Hurst, FMSO

China's overseas direct investment (ODI) has become one of the biggest economic stories of the 21st century. In a relatively short time span, China has become the number one overseas investor amongst developing countries as well as the world's sixth largest overseas investor overall with \$150 billion invested in foreign markets. This marks a development of strategic significance with implications that go beyond simple economics. This paper explores China's economic and political strategies of going global as well as the geopolitical implications for national security in political, economic, and diplomatic terms for the United States and other countries.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/FAO/Strategic-Implications.pdf>

North Korean-Chinese Wariness

19 January 2013

OE Watch Commentary: Up until quite recently, Chinese Communist Party officials avoided any public discussion of their relations with North Korea. However, given the events of the past year, as the North Korean leadership has largely disregarded Beijing's influence, this taboo has now vanished. As the brief excerpt from the adjacent article makes clear, in an effort to express annoyance at Pyongyang's policies, Chinese officials have begun to ratchet up their rhetoric.

Despite the stereotype, Chinese-North Korean relations have never been particularly warm. For centuries Koreans have resisted Chinese pressure. Both before and after the Korean War relations were strained between China and North Korea. For instance, during the war North Korean leader Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuei, who was the supreme commander of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA), fought over many key issues. Kim Il Sung had been humiliated not only by his enemies in the US and the Republic of Korea, but also by his "allies" in the Soviet Union and China. The origins of the North Korean Juche ideology (Self-Reliance) was created as a result of Kim Il Sung's experiences before and during the Korean War.

North Korea continues to regard China as a possible threat. Shortly before he died, former North Korean leader



Propoganda artwork of Kim Il Sung (left) and Peng Dehuei (right), via <http://www.wikipedia.org> and <http://www.globaltimes.cn>

Source: Wang Wenwen, "China Living in Denial of NK's Status as an Ally," Global Times Online, 24 February 2013.

China Living in Denial of NK's Status as an Ally

...There used to be some sympathy in Asia for North Korea and its striving defiance of the US and others that it sees as enemies. But now, even China, the long viewed ally of North Korea, sees North Korea's defiance as a nuisance.

In response to a UN Security Council resolution in late January that strengthened sanctions over North Korea's December rocket launch and for which China voted, Pyongyang claimed it would end talks on denuclearization efforts and carry out a third nuclear test.

Its strident announcement has put China, one that pushes forward the Six-Party Talks, in an awkward position.

The North even criticized China without explicitly naming it in a statement, "Those big countries, which are obliged to take the lead in building a fair world order, are abandoning without hesitation even elementary principles, under the influence of the US arbitrary and high-handed practices, and failing to come to their senses."

North Korea has never cared about China's attitude. When it needs China's assistance, it would please China by saying flattering words such as China's achievements of its reform and opening-up. But after it gets what it wants, it would show indifference to the policy.

When North Korea makes big decisions, it would rather inform Washington than Beijing.

Before it launched the satellite in April 2012, North Korea had already informed the US in

Continued: North Korean-Chinese Wariness

Kim Jong Il stated that “China has been the most difficult challenge to Korea historically.” Yet despite this antipathy, China continues to provide North Korea with essential economic (and, to a lesser degree, diplomatic) support. One possible explanation to this seeming contradiction can be found in the Chinese maxim that looks at North Korea as a chicken rib: even though it is of little value, one is hesitant to give it up. End OE Watch Commentary (Kim)

December 2011. When the news was released, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs felt embarrassed when asked if it had known about the launch.

This is the reality of the China-North Korea relationship. The North sees it as less important than its relationship with the US. If North Korea gradually gets closer to the US and the US admits it as a nuclear state, the rest of the international community would follow. But China doesn’t have such influence. The North knows this clearly.

The North has been good at seeking a balance among world powers and looking out for its own interests by making use of competition among others.

North Koreans, as well as some Chinese, believe that the country, standing on China’s east door, has been a guard of regional security for its neighbor. Therefore, no matter what North Korea does, China is supposed to support it to make it stable. This prompted North Korea’s intention to use this as diplomatic leverage on China.

China has leverage too. It is the main source of the North’s food, arms and fuel. Without these, North Korea cannot sustain itself, let alone carry out nuclear tests.

Nonetheless, China has never exercised this leverage. China even claims that it does not have much influence on North Korea. The North, however, picks up what China said and turns to the US, trying to bypass China in the Six-Party Talks.

China is mistakenly viewed as the only country with any real influence over North Korea. People forget the US has powerful arms, which the North holds in awe.

In this respect, North Korea takes a pragmatic approach. China’s economic influence on the North has been declining in the face of the military strength of the US.

The North has never viewed China as an ally. Even if the two ever had friendship, China has already lost North Korea.

The North has always been wary of China’s influence. In the 1950s, it introduced the ideology of Juche, which says that the Korean people are the masters of their country’s development. It also opposed flunkeyism, an idea which traditionally referred to subordination to Chinese Confucian culture and then meant subservience to foreign influence.

North Korea used to count on China to shield it from the US’ threat and pressure of the UN Security Council. When China didn’t do what the North wanted it to, the North would turn hostile, as it did this time.

Developing nuclear weapons is North Korea’s national policy. It’s not a bargaining chip that North Korea will give up under any circumstances.

North Korea may pretend to do so in order to get economic assistance from other countries and wait for the right timing, but will never follow through with it.

Alternate Viewpoints

25 February 2013

“In a recent interview that appeared in Megapolis, Daniyar Kosnazarov, an analyst in Kazakhstan, talked about the interests of Russia and the United States in Central Asia. Kosnazarov believes that Russia looks at Central Asia through a Cold War prism of regional security instead of seeing each country as having its own interests.”

OE Watch Commentary: There has been no shortage of criticism from security analysts in Russia of both the way NATO operations in Afghanistan have been conducted, and now, particularly, what will happen in the next couple of years. One of the criticisms that has been brought up a number of times (and again in the following article by Viktoriya Panfilova) is that when the United States or NATO forces withdraw from Afghanistan they will leave weapons and equipment with Central Asian governments and/or redeploy units from Afghanistan to bases in Central Asia. Analysts believe that these bases might become permanent in the event of a conflict or instability in one of the Central Asian countries. There is also a belief (mentioned in the article) that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is controlled by American and British intelligence agencies. Instead of trying to overlook or refute these beliefs, it might be worth looking at the criticisms in a different context than just Russia in contention with the United States for influence in Central Asia.

In a recent interview that appeared in Megapolis, Daniyar Kosnazarov, an analyst in Kazakhstan, talked about the interests of Russia and the United States in Central Asia. Kosnazarov believes that Russia looks at Central Asia through a Cold War prism of regional security instead of seeing each country as having its own interests. Kosnazarov goes on to say that Russia uses a Cold War viewpoint to try to maintain a dominant



U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, via <http://maps.google.com>

Source: Panfilova, Viktoriya. “Душанбе предлагает НАТО свою территорию (Dushanbe offers NATO the use of its territory),” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 25 February 2013. http://www.ng.ru/cis/2013-02-25/1_dushanbe.html

Dushanbe offers NATO the use of its territory

Tajikistan is ready to provide its territory for the transit of goods for International Security Assistance Forces in Afghanistan. On Friday the head of the information department of Tajikistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Davlat Nazriyev, announced that the country intends to do this, particularly for the United Kingdom... The United States decided to end the war in Afghanistan in 2014, but experts are convinced that there is not going to be a complete withdrawal. “Americans will not leave but simply reduce their presence in Afghanistan, setting the stage for a military presence in the Central Asian countries,” – said Alexander Sobyenin, head of Strategic Planning of the Russian Association of Border Cooperation. However, according to Sobyenin there needs to be serious reasons for a military presence, like “sudden conflict and destabilization.”

...The best route for the withdrawal of coalition forces (if that is the ultimate goal of

Continued: Alternate Viewpoints

*position in Central Asia without realizing that there are other players, like China or the United States (see: http://megapolis.kz/art/Daniyar_KOSNAZAROV_Budushchee_Tsentralnoy_Azii_v_Tadzhikistane_i_Kirgizstan). There is no question that Russian and Central Asian interests are closely tied together, particularly related to security in Afghanistan. However, it would be worth looking at the criticisms brought up in Panfilova's article (regardless of accuracy) as coming from a viewpoint that is outside of Central Asia, and as Kosnazarov said, does not see Central Asia as having its own interests. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

the United States) is the road from Kabul to Mazar-i-Sharif and from there by the rail line Hairaton-Termez and then through Uzbekistan. Experts believe that the route through Tajikistan and then Kyrgyzstan is only justified if the goal of the United States is to put units and/or military equipment and weapons on the territories of these republics...

...“It should not be excluded that the recent talks in Dushanbe did not resolve the question of an American presence in Tajikistan. It is possible that Dushanbe’s terms were not acceptable for the United States,” – said Alexander Knyazev, the program coordinator for the Central Asia Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences...“We can expect American actions to pressure (President of Tajikistan) Rahmon. For example, together with British allies, destabilize Gorno-Badakhshan where they have a powerful lever of influence in the leader of the Ismailis Aga Khan IV”...Knyazev does not rule out that a few dozen fighters from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (controlled by American and British intelligence agencies) could wind up in the Fergana Valley...

The Goals of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Its Impact on Central Asia and the United States

By Mr. Matt Stein

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) has been an active terrorist organization in the Central Asia region since its formation in 1998. Its original goal was to overthrow the government of Uzbekistan and establish an Islamic caliphate in the Fergana Valley region. When the terrorist attacks on 9/11 took place, the IMU was operating out of northern Afghanistan. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) dislodged the IMU from its support areas, and the organization changed its priorities, particularly targeting the government of Uzbekistan. This brief study examines the history, current operations, and goals of the IMU to help determine what threat the organization poses for the governments of Central Asia and for the United States while its forces remain in Afghanistan.



<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/IMU-Goals.pdf>

Pulling No Punches in Kyrgyzstan

30 January 2013

“The author refers to martial law being imposed, which might refer to how residents of Khushyar imposed their will by crossing into Charbak and taking hostages, as well as destroying property.”

OE Watch Commentary: In January residents of the villages of Charbak (Batken Province, Kyrgyzstan) and Khushyar (Uzbekistan’s Sokh exclave) clashed over utility poles that were apparently constructed on the wrong side of the border; Kyrgyzstan’s Border Guards apparently placed the poles a few meters into Uzbekistan’s territory and villagers of Khushyar protested. The protest escalated into a clash and hostages were taken on both sides of the border (see: February 2013 OE Watch, “Incident in Uzbekistan’s Sokh Exclave”). In early February 39 soldiers from an Interior Ministry unit in Bishkek deserted; the group claimed that they were subject to hazing by their commander. Most of the soldiers returned to their unit within a day (see: <http://www.knews.kg/ru/action/27533/>).

Both incidents caused public backlash against the government, and, as the following article shows, this frustration continues. The article is scathing in its assessment of Kyrgyzstan’s defense and security services, particularly the authorities who manage them. Also, the article was written for a specific audience: it originally appeared in the Kyrgyz language newspaper Kerege and was translated into Russian by Gezitter.

There are a couple of additional considerations to the author’s evaluation that the Sokh situation showed what can happen because of the poor state of Kyrgyzstan’s military and security forces. It is true that Uzbekistan closed the Sokh border with Batken for a number of days following the clash, but Kyrgyzstan’s Border Guards did likewise (see: <http://www.knews.kg/ru/society/26981/>). The



President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Sharshenovich Atambayev Kazakhstan, via <http://www.ozodlik.org>

Source: Tursunova, Elizat. ““Секонд-хенд армия”, генералы-”паразиты” (“Second-hand army,” Generals – “parasites”),” Kerege, 13 February 2013., http://www.gezitter.org/society/17991_sekond-hend_armiya_generalyi-parazityi/

“Second-hand army,” Generals – “parasites”

The state of the armed forces of Kyrgyzstan today is not good... In intrigue within the Interior Ministry, the events at the border, mass desertion of (Interior Ministry) soldiers – all this shows the current level of the security forces. Our citizens lost their desire to serve in the army a long time ago... If you look at the current state of the army, it can be seen like serving one year in prison. Only a lucky few leave the service without being crippled. Statistics of suicides, desertions, and waivers from service speaks for itself.

...What are the reasons for the lack of improvement in the army? After the collapse of the Soviet Union there were bases and equipment that remained in Kyrgyzstan... Since then this sector has not undergone a modernization and Soviet equipment has only lasted this long because of its quality. The weapons of Kyrgyzstan now do not meet requirements of today... The recent conflict in Sokh showed that if destructive forces take advantage of bad relations with a neighboring country, that country can not only shut down the border, but impose martial law...

In November last year (President) Almazbek Atambayev said “At present only the 25th Brigade, Scorpion (special forces unit) meets the requirements of defense and national security.” This unit was put together with the assistance of NATO. Last year Russia promised to assist the armed forces of Kyrgyzstan; Bishkek was supposed to receive \$1.1 billion to modernize the army... In the Batken situation Kyrgyzstan

Continued: Pulling No Punches in Kyrgyzstan

*author refers to martial law being imposed, which might refer to how residents of Khushyar imposed their will by crossing into Charbak and taking hostages, as well as destroying property. Police and the Border Guards in Charbak were overwhelmed and greatly outnumbered by the people. Lastly, the author refers to the \$1.1 billion Russian military aid package as if it had been received already. According to the November agreement, however, the specifics of the aid would be worked out by March and the equipment probably would not be delivered before the summer of 2013 (see: <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2060903>). Apparently, for some in Kyrgyzstan, that aid cannot come fast enough. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

experienced a shortage of weapons. There is an enterprise that develops weapons, but the focus of its work is unknown and the defense industry remains underdeveloped in our country...

The Kazakhstan-Russia Axis: Shaping CSTO Transformation

By Roger N. McDermott

Senior International Fellow,
Foreign Military Studies Office

United Kingdom



“Viewed from Kazakhstan’s perspective, the need to transcend the symbolism of the CSTO’s collective defense theme and promote ways in which it might meet real transnational and emerging security challenges is both real and urgent..”

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

Another Demonstration of Weapons in Kazakhstan

24 December 2012

“The shoot house and armored vehicles are only two examples of recent acquisitions, but they could be an indication that Kazakhstan is trying to develop broader capabilities of its airmobile units.”

OE Watch Commentary: In February there were a couple of exhibitions of weapons and equipment of Kazakhstan's Interior Ministry and the Army's 36th Air Assault Brigade. Photos of the exhibitions can be found at the two links on Tengri News above. While these are not necessarily the best indication of readiness or capabilities, there is some useful information that can be taken from the photos.

The Interior Ministry exhibition (which took place during a visit by Kazakh Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov) shows an assortment of equipment (computer databases, forensics kits, and an explosive ordnance disposal robot), vehicles (including a BTR), and various small arms. It is unknown which of this inventory is new or is in service across the country. Some of the specialized units highlighted in photos 21-23 have conducted several operations against extremist and criminal groups over the past few years with some success. While this could be considered one of the Interior Ministry's strengths, a newspaper recently discussed how corruption within the ranks hinders overall effectiveness (see: March 2013 OE Watch, “Kazakhstan's Internal Threats”).

The “Day of Open Doors” in the 36th Air Assault Brigade shows various vehicles and small arms at a facility outside Astana. The most notable photos (13-16) show soldiers practicing room clearing using live rounds, which,

Army's 36th Air Assault Brigade, via http://megapolis.kz/art/Kobra_protiv_hammera



Source: “Серіку Ахметову показали оружие и снаряжение МВД Казахстана (A weapons and equipment demonstration of Kazakhstan's Interior Ministry for Serik Akhmetov),” Tengri News, 13 February 2013., <http://tengrinews.kz/fotoarchive/376>

Source: “День открытых дверей в 36-ой десантно-штурмовой бригаде (The day of open doors in the 36th Air Assault Brigade),” Tengri News, 28 February 2013.



Continued: Another Demonstration of Weapons in Kazakhstan

according to the caption, is the first time they are able to conduct this level of training. Photo 39 is also worth noting, as it shows the brigade utilizing the Turkish-made "Cobra" armored vehicle. The "Cobra" is reported to have performed well in training exercises (see: http://megapolis.kz/art/Kobra_protiv_hammera, and http://megapolis.kz/art/Voyskam_neobhodima_peredishka). Last year Kazakhstan and the Turkish company Otokar (which produces the "Cobra") reached an agreement to start manufacturing the vehicle in Kazakhstan. The agreement with Otokar is part of Kazakhstan's effort to develop its own defense industry. The shoot house and armored vehicles are only two examples of recent acquisitions, but they could be an indication that Kazakhstan is trying to develop broader capabilities of its airmobile units. The 36th Air Assault Brigade has not been involved with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) or the Kazakhstan Peacekeeping Brigade (KAZBAT), the latter of which has been working with NATO. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



Photo 22



Photo 23



Turkish-made "Cobra" armored vehicle



Photo 39

Russian MoD Wants U.S. Style Reserve System?

7 March 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian Federation Ministry of Defense has been tinkering with wide-scale reforms of the military reserve system for several years. The current reserve system was inherited from the Soviet Union, and was designed for supporting a doctrine that required maintaining a large strategic reserve of troops who could be mobilized in the event of large-scale warfare. This pool of manpower was viewed strictly as a strategic reserve, being composed of conscripts and officers who had completed their mandatory service obligation and had been discharged from active service, with rare and infrequent call ups to test mobilization capabilities. Another consequence of the Soviet Union's mass mobilization doctrine was the necessity to maintain units and equipment for these mobilized reserve; these units were/are manned by small fulltime cadres, who would keep the equipment serviceable and maintain enough institutional knowledge to bring the mobilized reserves up to some level of combat readiness before deployment. Since 2009 many of these "skeleton units" were deactivated during the large-scale reforms of former Defense Minister Anatolii Serdyukov. Serdyukov had a different view of Russia's security threats than his predecessors, and believed that resources were being wasted on maintaining a mass mobilization capability to the detriment of bringing active units to full levels of operational readiness.*

There has been some debate about whether Russia needs to maintain a large strategic reserve or should switch to more of an operational reserve. Opinions vary between two major camps. The reformers say that an operational reserve would do far more to enhance security because an operational reserve would be smaller, better trained, more able to quickly become combat ready in a national emergency, and more likely to be called in an emergency. The older retired senior officers believe that the capability to mass mobilize should be maintained at all costs.



Russian Defense Minister Valery Gerasimov., via <http://foto.rg.ru/photos/6be20a2d/index.html>

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, "The General Staff Has Been Authorized To Report: Russia Is Creating Special Operations Forces," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 7 March 2013, <<http://rg.ru/>>, accessed 14 March 2013.

Yesterday General Staff Chief Valeriy Gerasimov made several important announcements at a meeting with representatives of foreign military attaches.

Gerasimov said that Special Operations Forces are being created in Russia. Similar subunits exist in a number of states and their role in the resolution of armed conflicts has only increased with time. Having studied how these units are formed, trained and used abroad, the RF Ministry of Defense came to the conclusion – Russia also needs them.

"A set of guiding documents, which define the directions of the development and the training and employment techniques of these forces, has already been developed. The corresponding command has been created," the General Staff Chief said.

One more piece of news concerns another relatively new structure for our country – the mobilization reserve. It will appear in Russia based upon the law, which was adopted at the end of 2012. And, in Gerasimov's words, the realization of the document will begin already this year. In the process, they will make the emphasis: "on breaking in the new system for recruiting reservists for military service. Classes on combat training and vehicle and weapons maintenance will be conducted with them."

Foreigners are constantly talking about the involvement of our military personnel not only in training battles but also in international operations – similar to the ones that the United States and its partners are conducting in Afghanistan. Russia is fundamentally prepared to participate in the resolution of conflicts beyond

Continued: Russian MoD Wants U.S. Style Reserve System?

The first talk of an operational reserve was in 2009, when the Ministry of Defense announced that 60,000 junior officers were to be dismissed from active service, but would be afforded the opportunity to contract into a reserve status that would pay on average 20,600 rubles (\$870) per month. The idea of establishing an operational reserve has apparently gained some traction, based upon the pronouncement by Chief of the General Staff, General Valeriy Gerasimov, in the accompanying article. Reserve reforms may be one of the few instances in the highly controversial arena of Russian military reform, where both conservatives and reformers get what they want. Russia appears to be driving full ahead with a reserve system that maintains the large strategic reserve for potential mass mobilization, while developing a more operational reserve that can be called upon more frequently. Interestingly, this system looks very similar to the US reserve system, consisting of an active reserve component and inactive reserve component (Individual Ready Reserve), with the Russian operational reserve conducting two-week annual training requirements, receiving monthly stipends, and being completely voluntary. It appears that Russia is still contemplating how these recourses will be utilized, as there are plans that these troops will fall in upon several reserve brigades, and some mention that these troops used to plus up regular active duty units in an emergency.

End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

its borders. In particular, Gerasimov recalled that we are guided by a system of reserve agreements and, if necessary, are prepared to allocate an aviation group, hospital, or engineer company within the framework of the UN. Furthermore, the 15th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade in Samara has been formed especially for peacekeeping missions. With respect to Afghanistan, Russia would prefer to cooperate with NATO together with our CSTO partners. But that variant does not suit the Western generals for some reason.

Gerasimov understands that it is difficult but necessary to reach an agreement with the West on contentious, European Missile Defense-type issues. That is why he invited Martin Dempsey, his colleague from the United States, to Moscow for talks. An international conference on European security problems is being organized in the Russian capital in May for this very reason.

Russian Federation to Develop Special Operations Forces Command

7 March 2013

“A set of guiding documents, which define the directions of the development and the training and employment techniques of these [special operations] forces, has already been developed. The corresponding command has been created...”

- Chief of the General Staff,
General Valeriy Gerasimov



Russian SPETSNAZ Special Forces, via <http://topwar.ru/17111-kakoe-budushee-ozhidaet-rossiyskiy-specnaz-posle-reformirovaniya.html>

OE Watch Commentary: *It appears that the military reforms begun during the tenures of former Russian Defense Minister Anatoli Serdyukov and Chief of the General Staff General Nikolay Makarov will continue and even broaden under the new Defense Minister, Sergey Shoigu, and Chief of the General Staff, General Valeriy Gerasimov. One area of new reforms involves the creation of a special operations command. General Gerasimov's 7 March 2013 pronouncement that "A set of guiding documents, which define the directions of the development and the training and employment techniques of these [special operations] forces, has already been developed. The corresponding command has been created..." is another sign that the Serdyukov era reforms will continue.*

This particular reform is interesting because Russia (and the Soviet Union) has long utilized SPETSNAZ units, but they have mostly been subordinated to conventional commanders. Details about

Source: Aleksey Mikhaylov, "Through Fire and Water," Trud, 13 March 2013, <<http://trud.ru/>>, accessed 14 March 2013.

As soon as next year, a special operations subunit will appear in our Armed Forces equipped with cutters and light motor boats for the combat actions on rivers and lakes, as well as the at the coastal sea areas. The General Staff has sent its proposals to Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu. If Shoigu gives his "go ahead," the waterborne special operations force will be created by the end of 2014.

As a Defense Ministry's representative told the Trud newspaper, based on the US and NATO-countries experience in Iraq and Libya, the coastal directions as well as the rivers and the lakes are a convenient routes for inserting the reconnaissance-saboteur groups and for attacking suddenly.

"The water provides cover and a surprise factor. A helicopter could be heard and seen but a boat or a cutter with a lower silhouette and with special engines equipped with sound suppressors are very hard to detect. And a coastal line hundreds or thousands of kilometers long is hard to cover tightly," in interlocutor explained.

A General Staff officer familiar with the situation offered some details: it is being proposed to create a special operations company to start with. True, though, it has not been decided yet whether this subdivision will be a part of the Navy, of the Ground Troops, or whether it will be a part of the Special Operations Center "Snezh."

"It is planned to equip the first platoon with the rubber boats with a hard bottom of the

Continued: Russian Federation to Develop Special Operations Forces Command

*the command and control relationships of this new command are sparse, but it could resemble the command and control structure of the Russian Airborne Forces. The newly formed special operations command could possibly be elevated to a separate branch of service in the Russian military hierarchy, enjoying the same level of autonomy as the other lesser branches of the Armed Forces (Airborne Forces, Strategic Rocket Forces, Aerospace Forces). What is certain is that this is strictly a development in the Ministry of Defense, and will have no impact on the command and control of the numerous other SPETSNAZ units in other ministries. While there may be comparisons made between a US and Russian special operations command, in no way will the Russian special operations command likely have anywhere near the autonomy of its US counterpart due to major institutional differences between the Russian and U.S. command and control systems, and generally very different military philosophies. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Futura Commando type made by the “Zodiak” firm; the second platoon will have light armored transport cutters; the third platoon is planned to be equipped with the cutters outfitted with the fire-support means. All flotation devices are to be equipped with the night vision devices, the radars, the thermal vision devices, and the GLONASS/GPS-based navigation equipment,” the General Staff officer told Trud. “While it does not present a problem to purchase the hard-bottom boats, we will have to place orders for the transport and combat cutters. The main requirement towards all equipment is that it has to be light-weight so it could be transported by an airplane or a helicopter.

The main task for the waterborne company will be troops landing and providing support to the special operations groups trained for the waterborne operations. But how did the troops view the General Staff’s idea? To tell the truth, very differently. An officer from one of the Southern Military District’s special operations brigades met the news about the waterborne spetsnaz with skepticism, “all of us undergo diving training and when necessary, we are capable of getting to the enemy’s rear, and it does not matter from where: from a sea or from a river. There are no such rivers in the Caucasus mountains where the cutters and the boats would be able to operate undetected. What are you talking about?! A submarine in the Caucasus mountains?! At the Caspian Sea, the cutters and ships of the Caspian Flotilla and the naval infantry subdivisions will be capable of handling such tasks.”

Candidate of Military Sciences, the veteran of military operations in Afghanistan Colonel Anatoliy Matveychuk, on the contrary, thinks that the creation of such a company is justified for the participation in low-intensity conflicts. “On the Russian territory and on the territory of the nearby countries, there are enough rivers and aquatic reservoirs where the waterborne spetsnaz company could operate. In a large-scale war, the cutters and boats will be detected fast, and their fire power is not sufficient for a serious combat. But such a subdivision can function very effectively against the militants!”

More Special Operations

7 March 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *The new chief of the Russian General Staff recently announced plans to create a special operations command, likely along the lines of the US model (SOCOM) and that of other Western countries. While the components of this new command have yet to be revealed, there are some probable candidates. Traditional spetsnaz brigades (recently transferred back under the Main Intelligence Directorate-GRU from the Ground Troops), elements from the airborne forces, as well as select Air Force and Navy assets will likely be placed under this command.*

As the excerpt from the first article indicates, the General Staff has already developed the plans for this new command. However, as earlier reform efforts have demonstrated, announcing the formation of a new structure is considerably easier than the actual implementation. Talk about creating a special operations command within the military dates back to 2008. Besides the ever important funding questions, there has been considerable resistance among the various military branches over command and control (C2) of these forces. Once they work out the coordination within the Ministry of Defense, there are still significant challenges in working out the C2 relationships with the special forces from the other power ministries (e.g., Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Emergency Situation, Federal Security Service, etc.).

Next year's Winter Olympics in Sochi will provide a challenging opportunity to test this new command. As the excerpt from the second article points out, Russian military leaders are already beefing up security in the region,



2014 Sochi Olympics logo, via <http://www.ruvr.ru>

Source: Yuriy Gavrilov, “Генштаб уполномочен сообщить Россия создает Силы специальных операций,” [General Staff is Authorized to Report that Russia is Creating Special Operations Forces.] Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 7 March 2013.

Defense Ministry to Create Special Operations Forces

Yesterday, Chief of the General Staff Valeriy Gerasimov made several important statements at a meeting with representatives of a foreign military attache.

...In particular, Gerasimov said that Special Operations Forces are being created within Russia. Similar units exist in a number of states, and over time their roles in resolving armed conflicts have only grown. After studying how such units are formed, trained and used overseas, the RF Ministry of Defense has concluded that they are also necessary in Russia.

“A set of guiding documents defining the areas to be developed, the methods of training, and the application of these forces has already been developed. The appropriate command staff has been created,” reported the Chief of the General Staff...

(continued)

Continued: More Special Operations

working to defend against both internal and external threats. Sochi is located adjacent to Russia's volatile North Caucasus region, and an attack upon the Olympics would provide a grand stage for those who have a grievance with the Kremlin. Even though the spetsnaz units deployed in this region already have considerable experience, providing effective security will require effective coordination among all of Russia's special operation forces. End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

Source: Aleksey Mikhaylov, "К защите Олимпиады в Сочи подключился армейский спецназ," [Army Spetsnaz Has Joined the Defense of the Olympic Games in Sochi] Izvestiya Online, 26 February 2013.

Russian Special Forces to Man Sochi Olympics Defensive Perimeter

The external security perimeter of the Olympic Games in Sochi will pass along the state border of Russia and Abkhazia and also along the administrative border of Kabardino-Balkaria. Ministry of Defense Spetsnaz Troops will cover the south of Krasnodar Krai and the territory of the Karachayev-Cherkessk Republic from the penetration of bandit formations from problem regions. Sergey Shoygu issued this combat order at the first meeting since the New Year of the "Sochi" Operational Group (OG), which was created in August 2012, an informed source in the Ministry of Defense told Izvestiya.

"The deployment and the range of missions of the elite units, which have become of part of the 'Sochi' Operational Group, are caused by the fact that the main threat to the security of the Games emanates from the bandit underground in the North Caucasus. Army Spetsnaz will cover the vast mountain region, which is contiguous to Sochi from the east," he said.

During the less than six months of its existence, the Operational Group has managed to become a major militarized structure. The Group's headquarters is located in Sochi....

...A high-ranking Southern Military District officer says that the terrorists in the North Caucasus have long since been driven into their mountain burrows but they have preserved the theoretical capability to infiltrate along the gorges to the area of Krasnaya Polyana. Military personnel also do not exclude that such international terrorist organizations as Al-Qaida will step up their activities closer to the Olympic Games....

"Right now the mountains are covered with the snow and there are prolonged periods of fog, so combat training will begin in the spring. We will devote a great deal of attention to coordination with aircraft, really, the rapid and precise disembarkation and evacuation of combat teams and the effective engagement of the enemy from the air play a decisive role in the mountains," the Southern Military District Officer said....

"The construction of the Olympic facilities is coming to an end but the slightest terrorist act could result in the disruption of the athletic events. In general, it will become a strong blow against Russia's prestige and is capable of provoking a political crisis. So we need to defend Sochi at all costs. Both brigades are marvelously trained and know all of the routes from Dagestan to the Black Sea," Shurygin told Izvestiya.

Anatoliy Matveychuk, a candidate of military sciences and a participant of the war in Afghanistan, said that combating terrorists is one of the Army Spetsnaz's primary missions.

"The Spetsnaz refined the operating tactics in the mountains, in mountain passes and ravines in Afghanistan and improved them in Chechnya. So defending the Olympics' external security perimeter is more convenient precisely for the Spetsnaz and not for FSB or MVD subunits," Matveychuk told Izvestiya.

According to Izvestiya's information, a third brigade is being formed in Yessentukov. It is possible that it will manage to participate in certain measures for the defense of the Olympics and then the total strength of the "Sochi" Operational Group's Army Spetsnaz will total more than 10,000 soldiers and officers.

Armenia's Importance in Russia's Strategic Calculations 19 February 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *On 18 February Armenia held presidential elections. Analysts did not expect anyone but the incumbent Serzh Sargsyan to win, since he faced no real competition. Lack of democratic institutions left the opposition divided and prevented a strong candidate who could challenge Sargsyan from emerging. His most formidable opponents – former president Ter-Petrossian and wealthy businessman Gagik Tsarukyan, leader of the Prosperous Armenia party – declined to run.*

Thousands of Armenians are now protesting the election results. Rafi Hovannisian, the challenger who came in second in the election with 37 percent of the vote, plans to hold more protests and to appeal the results with Armenia's Constitutional Court, although he has not dismissed the possibility of building a coalition with Sargsyan.¹

Alongside the emotion surrounding the immediate results of the election, it is also important to think more long-term and watch whether Armenia will tilt towards Russia or the West. The Kremlin has been pushing Yerevan to join the Russia-led Customs Union, a precursor to the Eurasian Union. Yerevan has been playing a balancing act between Russia and the West, but it cannot do so indefinitely, especially once the disputes over the legitimacy of the election have been resolved, regardless of who is president.

The following excerpts from the Russian press immediately after the election highlight the importance the Kremlin places on Armenia in its strategic calculations and how some Armenian analysts see Russia's role in their country.

Source: Irina Sattarova, "Самая верная. Почему Армения важна для России (The Most Loyal. Why Armenia is Important for Russia)," *Argumenty i Fauty (Arguments and Facts)*, 19 February 2013. <http://www.aif.ru/politics/article/60273>

The Most Loyal. Why Armenia is Important for Russia

Experts consider Armenia a reliable but an underestimated partner in the Caucasus...

Vyacheslav Nikonov, first deputy chairman of the Duma Committee on Foreign Affairs:

In the Caucasus, Armenia is Russia's main partner, a member of the CIS, Eurasian Economic Community, the Collective Security Treaty. Armenia over the past few years is the core of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Armenia - a supporter of closer integration of our countries. Armenia supports Russia on a range of international programs. Armenia - underrated, perhaps even most underrated partner of Russia in the CIS.

But there are no indicators that Sargsyan will change his approach to relations between our countries... Unfortunately, the issue of participation in the Customs Union and Common Economic Space for Armenia is extremely difficult, because we have no common border.

Ara Abrahamyan, President of the World Armenian Congress, the Union of Armenians of Russia, Goodwill Ambassador to UNESCO:

Armenia is the closest partner of Russia since the Soviet Union - the political, military. Armenia is a member of Collective Security Treaty. Armenia, for many centuries, was friends with Russia.

Over 2.5 million Armenians live in Russia. And within Armenia, the Russian people are treated much better than in Russia itself. Much better - I do not want to even compare.

... Unfortunately, you know conditions in Armenia are not the best— one million people left our country, including among them Russian speakers. But those who stayed are doing well.. we can show how to treat Russian speakers. I am now building a Russian Orthodox church in the best location in Yerevan.

Armenia is the most reliable partner in the Caucasus. But we expect further improvements. Now we have a very close relationship to the military and political sphere. It would be desirable to accelerate economic integration. It is very important for Armenia.

Source: "Россия будет настойчиво предлагать Армении участие в Евразийском союзе - российский эксперт (Russia will strongly suggest Armenia to participate in the Eurasian Union - Russian expert)," *Regnum.ru* 25 February 2013. <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1629481.html>

Russia will strongly suggest Armenia to participate in the Eurasian Union --Russian expert

... "Eurasian Union is the future, a reality. Armenia is a strategically important country in the South Caucasus. It is part of the post-Soviet space, and cannot remain indifferent to

Continued: Armenia's Importance in Russia's Strategic Calculations

On 19 February one of Russia's largest and well known weekly tabloids, Argumenty i Fakty (*Arguments and Facts*), published interviews with Vyacheslav Nikonov, First Deputy Chairman of the Duma Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Ara Abrahamyan, President of the World Armenian Congress, the Union of Armenians of Russia, and Goodwill Ambassador to UNESCO.

Nikonov and Abrahamyan discuss why Armenia is important for Russia and why Russian-Armenian relations are unique in the Caucasus. The title of the article alone, "The Most Loyal. Why Armenia is Important for Russia," is telling. Abrahamyan underscores the importance of economic integration with Russia for Armenia and says Armenians can "show how to treat Russian speakers." Nikonov, who does not expect Sargsyan to change his policy towards the Customs Union, notes that Armenia is perhaps Russia's "most underrated partner" in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

On 25 February Information Agency Regnum.ru published an interview with another expert, Alexander Dugin of the International Eurasian Movement, Sociology of International Relations Department chair of Moscow State University. Dugin argues that Russia will "strongly suggest" to Armenia to join the Eurasian Union, adding that this Union is "the future." In his view, the Eurasian Union is a simple realpolitik step Moscow is taking to prevent what it views as Western hegemony.

Russia for its part is also paying attention to the foreign press. On 18 February Inosmi.ru, a major media site that translates foreign media into Russian, published an article by Mousa Mikaelyan, reporter and observer of Armenia's politics, who comments on the significance of Russian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Valeriy Gerasimov's visit to Armenia on the tail end of the presidential electoral campaign. The reporter concludes that Russia must be playing a "broad game" in Armenia, aimed at protecting its strategic interests in the country.

Armenia rarely makes prime-time news in the West, and some analysts may dismiss the country's significance. These press excerpts suggest that the Kremlin is of a different opinion. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

1. Emil Sanamyan, "Armenia's California Dream. The unlikely candidate shaking up the country's political establishment, Foreign Policy, March 4, 2013. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/03/04/armenia_s_california_dream_politics_elections?page=0,0

the integration processes around it..." [Sociology of International Relations Department chair of Moscow State University and leader of the International Eurasian Movement, Alexander] Dugin said, expressing confidence that Russia will periodically to Yerevan to participate in this project in one form or another.

... [Dugin noted] the pressure will be correct, soft, without imperialist pretensions. "Today, Moscow does not have the resources to do otherwise, no desire to do that, no ability," Dugin is convinced. According to the leader of the International Eurasian Movement, behind the concept of creating the Eurasian Union is a rather simple zero-sum game, the main actors which are Russia and the West. "In the end, everything comes down to these two actors. Russia not satisfied with the developed in the West models for developing the world, of which, until recently, were current two - hegemonic and neoliberal (globalization model). The result is the Eurasian Union - an attempt to create from a unipolar world a multipolar one, which, along with other hegemons (China, the Islamic world, Europe and so on) will be able to strike a balance," underscored Dugin....

Source: Mousa Mikaelyan, "Россия ведет в Армении широкую игру" (Russia is playing a broad game in Armenia), Inosmi.ru, 18 February 2013. <http://www.inosmi.ru/sngbaltia/20130218/206041654.html>

Russia is playing a broad game in Armenia

Russia's Armed Forces Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov came to Armenia. This visit is notable in several respects.

First, it took place in the finale of the election campaign in Armenia and, in fact - on the eve of voting. Second...the visit took place after the Russian leader Vladimir Putin instructed the country's security services to defend the idea of the so-called "Eurasian integration" at the post-Soviet territory from unwanted opponents. Third, General Gerasimov - is the third, so-called silovik guest from Moscow; CSTO Secretary General Nikolai Bordyuzha, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, and in addition to them- Valery Gerasimov - and all this in the course of the electoral campaign month in Armenia.

...In all likelihood, for Moscow, the intrigue of internal power struggle in Armenia at some point ceased to be of interest. And Moscow has chosen not to spend time and energy on this internal affair, and do not counter-position itself against the West on this issue, and to try to put the resources available to a much wider game and realize protection of the interests precisely at this level....

Massoud Barzani's Visit to Russia, and the Moscow-Erbil-Baghdad Triangle

20 February 2013

OE Watch Commentary: On 19 February Iraqi Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani came to Moscow for an official visit, accompanied by a high-level delegation. This was the first time Kurdistan's president visited Russia. The visit was significant, as Barzani aimed to strengthen ties with Russia. The following excerpts show how some in Russia viewed his visit and how Barzani wanted to present himself there. They also highlight the Erbil (the capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq)-Baghdad tensions and Russia's role in Iraqi politics.

The first excerpt is from an interview with Barzani published on 20 February on the website of Radio Russia (Golos Rossii), a state radio broadcasting company that, by its own description, aims to, among other things, familiarize the world with the Russian point of view.

In the interview Barzani made it a point to thank "all the Russians," as he recalled how the Russian people sheltered his father, Mustafa Barzani, when he was exiled from Iraq in the late 1940s. "During that difficult time this help was indispensable. From Moscow's side it was a very moral, dignified position. And we hope that our relations will develop on the same principles in the future," said Barzani, stressing Russia's importance in resolving global challenges.

Barzani made several other important points during his interview. He emphasized what while Baghdad is opposed to a number of oil and gas contracts Kurdistan signed with foreign companies—which the Kurdistan leadership in Erbil believes to be a position that contradicts the Iraqi Constitution—foreign oil companies are



Current President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party Massoud Barzani, via <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20130121/178925765.html>

Source: Elena Suponina, "Президент Иракского Курдистана: "Хочу сказать спасибо всем россиянам" (President of Iraqi Kurdistan: "I want to Say Thank You to all Russians)," Radio Golos Rossii (Radio Voice of Russia), 20 February 2013. http://rus.ru/ru/2013_02_20/105466217/

President of Iraqi Kurdistan: "I want to Say Thank You to all Russians

...

Massoud Barzani often gratefully remembers how his father, a famous Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani, who after World War II tried to create a Kurdish autonomic republic in Iraq and was persecuted for it, found political asylum in the Soviet Union. Before the talks with Russian leaders Massoud Barzani told the "Voice of Russia" about the purpose of their [the delegation's] visit.

- The objectives of our visit touch upon both politics and economics. We will discuss with the Russian leadership how to find, for instance, a resolution to the Syrian problem. Russia is a great country, thanks to which solutions can be found not only for this, but many other international problems. I also want to thank the Russian people for the entire history of our relations. After all, it is the Russian people who provided shelter to my father, Mustafa Barzani and his companions when they were forced to hide from persecution. It was in the middle of the twentieth century, but we remember it very well today. During that difficult time this help was indispensable. From Moscow's side it was a very moral, dignified position. And we hope that our relations will develop on the same principles in the future. Once again I want to say thank all Russians.

Continued: Massoud Barzani's Visit to Russia, and the Moscow-Erbil-Baghdad Triangle

not planning on leaving Kurdistan, adding that he planned on discussing further cooperation with Russia in this area. He also downplayed the \$4 billion arms deal Baghdad made with Moscow in October 2012, at first stating that the deal did not happen at all. While the Kurdistan leadership is not opposed to Baghdad making arms deals, Barzani would like assurances that the weapons will not be used against the Iraqi people internally. He added that Kurdistan would be ready to purchase Russian weapons if offered such a deal. Finally, he said that while Kurds will always dream of independence, they will never pursue it by violent means.

On 26 February Centrasia.ru published a piece by foreign policy analyst M. Agadzhanian on the "Russia-Kurdistan-Iraq triangle." Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki sought, in his October 2012 visit to Moscow, to prevent Russian President Putin from receiving Barzani, writes Agadzhanian. In his view, however, the Kremlin made the right and "even-handed" decision in balancing between Baghdad and Erbil. Baghdad is trying to distance Moscow from Kurdistan. It is important for Moscow to maintain good relations with Baghdad for cooperation on arms deals, and neither Moscow nor the Kurdish leadership wants to worsen relations with Baghdad. Yet, Baghdad's attempts to distance Erbil and Moscow touch on "sensitive" issues of Russia's "international and regional image," writes Agadzhanian; nor, he adds, can it serve the long-term interests of all three parties.

The Moscow-Baghdad- Erbil dynamic is important to watch, particularly after Barzani's first trip to Moscow. It could be a harbinger of further developments in this complicated relationship. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

1. Many contradictory reports came out in the press about a cancellation of the deal after corruption allegations, although the latest reports show that Moscow and Baghdad are proceeding with the deal.

See, for example, Ali Abdel Sadah, "Iraq and Russia Going Ahead With \$4 Billion Arms Deal," Al Monitor, February 28, 2013.
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/02/iraq-russia-arms-deal.html>

- Your Excellency, you once mentioned that today foreign companies in Iraqi Kurdistan do not face problems. But the Russian company Gazprom Neft, which signed in 2012 an agreement with Kurdistan, is under pressure from the federal government of Iraq. Isn't that so?
- Yes, indeed, the federal government of Iraq is still opposed to a number of contracts that are signed by the regional government of Iraqi Kurdistan with foreign companies to develop oil and gas reserves in the north. Among the federal government's objections are also the activities of the Russian company Gazprom Oil, which is working with Iraqi Kurdistan. However, to our knowledge, at present, Gazprom Oil is not only not going to leave Kurdistan, but is even going to sign a new agreement with us.

Among our delegation members is the Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources of Kurdistan. So we are going to discuss with Russia the prospects for cooperation in this area. We consider the objections of the federal government in this regard illegal. They are contrary to the Constitution of Iraq...

- You have recently been exporting oil (and now plan to sell gas) more and more without the consent of the federal government. Why?
- Because the federal government does not seek a mutual understanding. For example, we give some oil to oil refineries in other regions of Iraq, in exchange for which we should regularly receive oil products. But in practice, for some reason, the federal government cuts back on our owed quota of oil products. And in this situation, we have the right to look for a way out of this situation...
- It seems that you are using a large share of Kurdistan's autonomy in decision-making. Is there a danger of a split in Iraq?
- Kurds will never be the cause of the split of Iraq. But we will not allow anyone to violate the rights of the Kurdistan, region which are guaranteed to us in the Constitution.
- But the Kurds have sought independence for years. Do you no longer need it?
- Kurds have always dreamed of independence. This is our right. And it is quite possible. But we will never seek it through force...
- Russia recently signed a major arms agreement with Iraq. Its estimated value is more than four billion dollars. But some Kurdish politicians have opposed the deal. What is your opinion?
- It seemed to us that a deal between Iraq and Russia in the field of armaments had fallen through and won't happen.
- Not so, Mr. President, it has not fallen through.
- In any case, the deal is clearly fraught with difficulties. We are not

Continued: Massoud Barzani's Visit to Russia, and the Moscow-Erbil-Baghdad Triangle

opposed to the Iraqi army arming itself. This is necessary for the defense of the country. However, we insist that any country supplying weapons to Iraq put a condition that these weapons are never used against the people inside the country, that it is never used in internal conflicts. We have concerns in this regard.

....

- So maybe, Iraqi Kurdistan will buy Russian weapons?

- If they will be sold to us, we are ready to buy. And we are willing to pay for such weapons.

Source: M. Agadzhanian, "М. Агаджанян: Визит М. Барзани в Москву - как обойти острые углы в треугольнике Россия-Курдистан-Ирак? (M. Agadzhanian: Barzani's Visit to Moscow: How to Avoid the Russia-Kurdistan-Iraq Sharp Triangle Edges) Centrasia.ru, 26 February 2013. <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1361888040>

M. Agadzhanian: M Barzani's Visit to Moscow: How to Avoid the Russia-Kurdistan-Iraq Sharp Triangle Edges

...

Informed sources noted that one of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's objectives during his visit to Moscow (October 2012), was to prevent Barzani from being received by the head of the Russian state. But Moscow has made an absolutely adequate, given the current situation in the Middle East, decision. Central government's efforts in Baghdad not to allow diplomatic contacts of the regional government in Erbil with other states do not meet the needs of the time and are counterproductive.

The Iraqi Kurdistan's leadership...is being fairly smart diplomatically, without aggravating the already tense relations with Baghdad.

An important nuance of such diplomatic even-handedness manifested during the reception of the Southern Kurdish delegation in Moscow. On February 21 the delegation was given an audience on Smolensk Square. During the meeting in the Russian Foreign Ministry also participated Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, and Iraq's ambassador in Moscow Fa'iq Ferik Nervei.

On the Russian side the level of diplomatic correctness against Baghdad was also sustained at a high level. So, on February 21, Minister Lavrov, speaking with a welcoming address to the Iraqi Kurdistan delegation, stressed Russian president's words on the eve of the visit, "We must strengthen our friendly ties between Russia, Iraq and Kurdistan."

Thus, neither Erbil, nor especially Moscow is bent on worsening relations with Baghdad. At the same time, Baghdad's previous approaches to official contacts between the Russian and the southern Kurdistan sides do not satisfy Moscow, which does not wish to restrict the freedom of its foreign policy maneuvering in the Middle East.

The building of bilateral ties between Moscow and Erbil should not be held hostage to smooth relations between Russia and the central Iraqi government....

Is important for Moscow to maintain positive dynamics of the relationship with Baghdad in the sphere of military-technical cooperation set during last year's visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki. Baghdad's steps following al-Maliki's visit testify to the continuation the central Iraqi government's policy of distancing Moscow and Erbil from each other. We can straight out say that in the conclusion of large Russian-Iraqi arms contracts...one could discern the Iraqi capital's interest to dissuade Moscow from the close and, more importantly, official contacts with Erbil.

But such foreign policy cannot serve long-term interests of any of involved parties. Iraq's actions affect quite sensitive issues for Russia's international and regional image....

University Student-Soldier Training

26 February 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *Russian security officials continue to wrestle with the problem of attracting adequate numbers of healthy young men to serve in the military. By law, all able-bodied Russian males between the ages of 18-27 are required to serve one year in uniform. There have been, however, a number of deferments which allow young men to escape conscription. One of the more popular methods of avoiding military service has been the pursuit of higher education, where, traditionally, smart Russian males have completed post-graduate studies merely to avoid the draft. As the excerpt from the adjacent article suggests, this option may soon be transformed.*

Up until quite recently, many Russian universities and institutions of higher learning had a military department which offered ROTC-like training to students. Upon graduation, the majority of these students received the equivalent of a reserve commission which, in most instances, exempted them from any additional military service. However, in 2009, as part of the reform of the military education system, many of these military departments in universities were eliminated. If they did not elect to pursue post-graduate studies, university students faced the unattractive prospect of serving one year as a conscript upon graduation. Given this difficult choice, officials from the Ministry of Defense and Russian academia are now proposing a combined plan of study and military service for university students.

While the specific details have yet to be worked out, the proposal calls for



Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu, via <http://www.vestnikkavkaza.net>

Source: Mariya Agranovich, “Студенты будут служить добровольно,” [Students Will Serve Voluntarily], Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 26 February 2013.

University Rector Explains Plan to Train Students as Reservists

Service in the army while a student will be voluntary. This was announced today by Anatoliy Aleksandrov, principal of the Moscow State Technical University Named for Bauman, the author of the idea.

We would remind you that we recently learned of a proposal from a group of college principals to make service in the army an “embedded” part of the tuition process for students. Instead of 12 months after receiving their diploma, they will have the opportunity to complete their service while in their last three years of study, doing three months each year. Studies in the military faculty will count toward the missing three months required to make up a year.

“Despite the reports that have proliferated in the media that this would be service during the vacations, I will say that a decision has already been adopted: The guys will serve throughout the year -- some in the fall, some in the autumn. We will take only half a month from the summer vacations. The initiative has been supported by the Ministry of Defense, and we have sent the Ministry of Education and Science a request to increase the length of the tuition program for a bachelor’s degree from 4 to 4.5 years.”

Why did such an idea arise at all, and in what way is it good for the students themselves?

In Aleksandrov’s words, in the past five years the system of providing military training in higher educational establishments has virtually disappeared: Whereas previously virtually all the kids at Bauman did military training, now only 125 students a year out of

Continued: University Student-Soldier Training

*university students to spend 2-3 months per year involved in some sort of military training. At the end of their four years in college, students would have completed the equivalent of one year of training. It is not yet clear whether this one year of training would exempt these students from any further military commitment. There are also unresolved questions regarding where students would train, general administrative and logistic requirements, training objectives, and funding sources. Proponents maintain, however, that such a concept would help acclimatize young men to the rigors of military service and relieve some of the manpower shortages; if done well, it could also instill a greater sense of patriotism among Russian youth. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

20,000 study military affairs.

“There is nothing we can do; that is the quota. But there are 10 times as many who would like to do this!” Aleksandrov says

Of course, there are also many “freeloaders” among them. But the authors of the idea have thought up a way to really interest the kids in military service. The shorter summer vacations, in their opinion, will be more than covered by “bonuses” of every possible kind. Students who decide to undergo “embedded” army service will be sent to elite military units not far from home so they have the opportunity to go home to their family on weekends. Whereas if a student goes to serve after completing his studies, as a rule he is sent to a randomly chosen unit.

“Minister of Defense Sergey Shoygu has promised that the very best conditions will be created for such students -- not a weekly bath but a daily shower, a well-tailored uniform, possibly bearing the college logo, and we may even see coffeemakers in barracks,” Aleksandrov confided.

But the main thing is that the students will get training on the most modern military equipment. The guys will spend two hours a day doing physical training and marching drills, while the rest of the time they will be studying.

After such training the people graduating from their college will be not only experts with diplomas but also superbly trained reservists. That said, the traditional form of military training in higher educational establishments is also being retained. Reserve officers will continue to be trained in military faculties. And higher educational establishments with their own military training centers will train people who after graduation will go to serve in the army as a career officer. Service in “installments” is a third option that in no way cuts across or rules out the two previous ones.

Military faculties currently operate in 32 higher educational establishments in Russia. These are mainly big universities and technical colleges that are “honed” to train experts for high-tech manufacturing and the defense industry. But order to get on the program they will still have to undergo a selection process and participate in a competition. In Aleksandrov’s words, all the details will have been chewed over by as early as March and a competition will possibly be announced at that time. A higher educational establishment will have to prove that the experts that it trains can be useful in the army....

A student who has chosen the new form of service will have to sign a contract and be aware of the full responsibility of the decision that he has made. There can no longer be any “ducking out” or second thoughts. That is to say, this is of course a possibility, but in that case his service will not count and he will have to go and serve for a year anyway after receiving his diploma.

Naturally the new procedures will be tested in the course of an experiment to begin with. It will begin this fall.

“I believe that next year will be sufficient for us to get a clear idea of all the deficiencies and to whip the new form of service ‘into shape,’” Anatoly Aleksandrov considers.

Sober Military Drivers and Prospects

20 February 2013

OE Watch Commentary: *Driving in Russia is not for the faint of heart or for those under the influence. Automobile ownership has continued to outpace infrastructure development, resulting in congested traffic on often poorly maintained roads. The combination of these factors and extreme weather and a sometimes casual regard for traffic laws has resulted in one of the highest traffic fatality rates among industrialized countries. To place the carnage in perspective, from 2010-2012 more Russians died from traffic accidents than the combined Soviet/Russian military losses in the wars in Afghanistan and Chechnya.*

Since late 2012, after a number of horrific drunk-driving traffic accidents, Russian politicians have proposed a series of new tougher laws to discourage drinking and driving. Fines have increased significantly, and those involved in fatal accidents will be subject to possible prison sentences. Military officials have also redoubled their efforts to combat drunk driving. Under the previous directive, an officer could be punished only if he was drunk while on duty or involved in an accident. As the referenced article points out, the new minister of defense has directed that military regulations be amended to strongly penalize military officers convicted of driving while intoxicated, whether on duty or off, or involved in an accident or not.

The extent of the drunk-driving problem in the military can be inferred from the statistics in the article. During a single six-month period, in one military



Russian drunk driving billboard saying "This could be your body!"; via <http://www.adweek.com/adfreak/russian-drunk-driving-billboard-awesome-11633>

Source: Aleksey Mikhaylov, "Шойгу будет увольнять офицеров за пьянство за рулем" [Shoygu Will Fire Officers for Driving While Drunk], Izvestiya Online, 20 February 2013

Law Revision Will Mean Officers Can Be Fired for Drunk Driving

There are plans to dismiss from service in the Armed Forces military personnel who are caught in the act of driving motor vehicles while in a state of alcoholic or narcotic intoxication. A military department source told Izvestiya that Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu has issued an order to this effect.

"The Defense Ministry Main Directorate for Personnel and the legal department have been mandated to prepare, before 1 Jun, the necessary draft regulations, including ministerial orders and legislative amendments," Izvestiya's informant noted.

He explained that grounds for dismissal of officers from the Army are enshrined in the federal law "On Military Service Obligation and Military Service," but do not yet provide for driving while intoxicated.

"The plan is to add an amendment to this law, stipulating that a serviceman may face dismissal for driving a motor vehicle whilst in a state of alcoholic intoxication, including while off duty. An equivalent provision exists in the legislation on the internal affairs agencies, the Federal Penal Service, and other security departments," he said.

Additionally, amendments to several other legislative acts will be required. The

Continued: Sober Military Drivers and Prospects

district more than 100 officers were charged with DWI, several after being involved in serious accidents. It is not clear if any of these officers were dismissed. The article points out that some officers have reacted negatively to the proposed legislation, not because they advocate drinking and driving, but because of concerns that corrupt highway officials may deliberately target them to augment their income. Regardless of the other social obstacles, tightening up military regulations surrounding drinking and driving appears to be long overdue. End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

amended draft law will be presented to the State Duma some time in 2013, the Defense Ministry spokesman said.

Currently, a serviceman may only be dismissed for drunkenness if he arrives on duty in that condition. Disciplinary measures are applicable for the normal execution of service obligations, and criminal proceedings in the case of combat alert.

Over the past 10 years, to my recall, dismissal for drunk driving has been applied only in cases of criminal violations, that is, causing injury or fatality," a military lawyer at the Main Directorate for Personnel said.

The troops themselves are not happy with Shoygu's new initiative; they predict extortion by Highway Patrol Service inspectors.

"Highway services staffers know that officers receive a fairly high salary. I am certain we shall become an attractive target for them," one Central Military District officer told Izvestiya.

Aleksandr Kanshin, chairman of the Public Chamber commission on national safety issues, stated in an interview for Izvestiya that the initiative is in servicemen's interests, but that repressive measures must be avoided.

"The measures can only be supplementary, whereas the main ones should reside in the sphere of moral conviction. When Shoygu headed up the Emergencies Ministry, it was precisely the moral principle that guided him," Kanshin said.

According to statistics from a Central Military District general troops army, from July 2012 through January 2013 officers were caught in an intoxicated state more than 100 times by Road Traffic Safety Inspectorate patrols, and caused over 30 road traffic accidents, several of which ended in fatalities. This is despite the fact that military units and Army brigades are mostly located in separate garrisons and that their officers drive into major population centers only rarely.

Biographical Sketch: Dmitry Rogozin and Russian Nationalism

By Ray Finch

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



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

Ukraine's Navy Modernization: Challenges and Prospects

21 February 2013

OE Watch Commentary: According to its defense doctrine, the main purpose of the Ukrainian Navy is to be able to restrain, identify, and neutralize military conflicts, as well as to defend the country against military aggression on the sea, either on its own or in cooperation with other Ukrainian military forces. Questions have risen, however, whether the current state of the Ukrainian Navy is sufficient to perform this primary mission. As the excerpt from the adjacent article reveals, Ukraine's Navy is suffering from many systemic problems that are not likely to be overcome in the near future.

Officially, the Ukrainian Navy possesses 25 combat ships and corvettes, more than 50 service ships, and about 30 naval aircraft. Most are old Soviet vessels whose seaworthiness is questionable. Only three of these ships are less than 20 years old, and the remainder are in urgent need of modernization. The article refers to an embarrassing incident when the Ukrainian ship "Kakhovka" failed to block the Russian ship "Mirazh" after the former broke down during the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008.

In an attempt to change the situation, in 2012 the Ukrainian government allocated 170 million hryvnya (\$21 million) for repairing 20 military and technical ships. The objective was to have ten ships fully capable of performing defensive military operations in the Black Sea region, as opposed to maintaining a large but ineffective fleet. However, merely repairing and modernizing the remaining fleet will have little impact if training and operations are neglected. As the excerpt points out, the few serviceable vessels in the naval



Ukrainian corvette Pridneprovye, via <http://www.shipspotting.com/>

Source: "Sorry Condition of the Ukrainian Navy," Den, 21 February 2013.

Sorry Condition of the Ukrainian Navy

...On 22 August 2008, the Ukrainian missile cutter Kakhovka cut to the middle of the warship fairway off the Bay of Sevastopol. The task was to block the way for the Russian corvette Mirazh returning to base after participation in the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia. Ukraine, condemning the engagement of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in this conflict, even threatened not to let the Russian ships back to Sevastopol. Anyway, the Kakhovka lost power and the Mirazh breezed by into the harbor, mocking the Ukrainians by waiving the towing end.

This episode was a shining example of the situation in the Ukrainian Navy. Not so long ago it had 93 per cent of its vessels deemed unseaworthy. Last year, the Ukrainian authorities allocated 170m hryvnyas [around 21m dollars] to repair them. According to Ukrainian Navy Commander Yuriy Ilyin, this amount was "five times more than we had in the past years". The total of 20 warfare ships, boats and support vessels went into docks for overhaul: the Sevastopol shipyard received a contract to repair the frigate Hetman Sagaidachny, the Ukrainian Navy's flagship; and Mykolayiv-based Chernomorskyy shipyard signed up to repair the majority of the remaining warships. The idea was to build up, by the start of the next year, the core of the fleet comprising a dozen seaworthy vessels "fully capable of performing complex tasks". The commanders' plan also provided for putting 31 support vessels in service (the entire fleet comprises more than 70 vessels). So now there is hope that next time at the most crucial moment they will not fail.

Continued: Ukraine's Navy Modernization: Challenges and Prospects

inventory have deployed for but brief periods during the past couple of years.

*Most security experts on the Black Sea region are generally skeptical of the immediate prospects for modernizing the Ukrainian Navy. There are a number of contributing factors, to include a weak economy, corruption, poor planning, and domestic political instability. At the same time, however, there is some positive evidence. Along with the above-mentioned decision to focus on modernizing the newer ships, the navy has started regular patrol missions in the Black Sea. Ukraine is planning to finalize the restoration of the main core of its fleet by mid-Spring 2013, which would allow an increase in the number of ships participating in Black Sea patrols. Therefore, despite serious financial constraints, with sufficient political will the Ukrainian Navy could begin partial modernization. **End OE Watch Commentary (Moldavanova)***

...The "prescribed service life" is not essential here, though: the same class corvettes Pridneprovye and Kremenchug were commissioned almost simultaneously in 1982-83. However, Kremenchug, which was added to the Ukrainian Navy in the state of disrepair, has never been repaired and even had some of its parts removed to patch up Pridneprovye. Nevertheless, a smaller yet operational navy would certainly make more sense for Ukraine.

However, it is an entirely different matter that, according to former Defense Minister Dmytro Salamatin, they decided to economize by reducing the fleet's operations at sea. Such operations are already rare: according to the official statistics of the Ukrainian Armed Forces General Staff, in 2011 the average length of sea operations of Ukrainian Navy warships as part of the joint rapid deployment forces amounted to 22 days, and as part of the principal Armed Forces - half of that. The statistics for the previous years were roughly the same. About one third of this time is attributed to participation in the traditional joint Ukraine- American Sea Breeze naval exercise which is fully funded by the USA, with Ukraine covering only the so-called protocol expenses.

There still hope that the next step will be to increase the number of missions at sea, firing exercises, etc. Without professionalism even serviceable ships might not help. By the way, the Ukrainian Navy has already been criticized for lack of professionalism which led to additional funding of repairs. For example, during the storm in Sevastopol on 11 November 2007, Ukrainian warships, unlike Russian vessels, were not timely and safely moored. The corvette Vinnitsya rammed into the control ship Slavutych, and the tugboat Korets squashed its starboard against it. The control ship Donbas had to be rescued by tug boats as it went powerless and unable to steer on its own, putting other vessels at risk.

The higher echelons also have not proven error-free, contributing to unwanted spending on fleet repairs. Some time ago a battery for the only submarine in the Ukrainian Navy was purchased from a Greek company for 3.5m dollars. The battery's cross section turned out to be square rather than round, which made it unusable for the submarine in question. To avoid difficult and risky remodeling of the ageing submarine, it was decided to buy another battery.

...But there is still some basis for optimism: the Defense Ministry has issued an order to start regular patrol missions by Ukrainian Navy ships in the Black Sea. On 15 February, the first such patrol mission was carried out by the antisubmarine corvette Ternopil.

Africa: Iran's Final Frontier?

Special Essay: Africa: Iran's Final Frontier?

The Islamic Republic of Iran and its nuclear ambitions remain at the center of American diplomatic attention. Outreach to Iran was the focus of President Obama's first television interview as president in 2009.¹ A desire for rapprochement continues into the Obama administration's second term. Speaking at the Munich Security Conference on 2 February 2013, for example, Vice President Joe Biden offered direct, bilateral talks with Iran.² Policy concern regarding Iran also consumes a disproportionate share of U.S. military resources. Even as the number of aircraft carriers within the U.S. Navy shrinks to 10—from 12 in 2007—the Pentagon remains committed to stationing an aircraft carrier strike group in the Persian Gulf, largely because of Iran. Prior to Operation Desert Shield in 1990, the United States did not generally station any carriers in the Persian Gulf.

Iran's strategy, however, is broader than Western policymakers' focus on its nuclear program and its activities in the Middle East or perhaps Latin America. American strategists might describe Iran as a "regional power," but in recent years Iranian officials describe the Islamic Republic as an "extra-regional power."³ They see Iran as a pivotal state able to exert its influence not only in the Middle East, but also in South Asia, and not only in the Persian Gulf, but also in the Indian Ocean. Tehran's diplomatic ambitions, however, may be considerably broader: Iran increasingly appears to be looking at Africa as fertile ground for expanding influence. Iranian outreach takes many guises and is geared to specific purposes, some diplomatic and others military.

With successive U.S. administrations and European governments effectively ignoring Africa, Tehran sees many of its 54 countries as diplomatic easy picking in a zero-sum game for influence. In comparison to the American presidents, who have made three, multi-country African visits between 2003 and 2012, the Iranian president travels to Africa at least annually, while other Iranian ministers visit even more frequently.⁴

In his latest tour of Africa in January 2013, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi visited Benin, Ghana, and Burkina Faso, before ending his tour in Ethiopia, where he attended the annual African Union summit. Speaking in Ghana on 7 January 2013, he declared Africa to be an Iranian priority.⁵ Salehi's rhetoric is not empty; his tour tops off a concerted five-year Iranian push.⁶

Over this time the Iranian diplomatic strategy toward Africa has been threefold: first, with additional aid Tehran has cultivated countries voting in important international bodies, such as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council or term members serving on the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors. Additional targets for Iranian largesse have been African states active in the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Union. Second, beyond the diplomatic quid pro quo, Iranian officials appear to be prioritizing outreach to those African countries mining or prospecting for uranium. Lastly, senior Iranian officials have sought to cement partnerships which they could leverage into basing rights.

The Quest for Diplomatic Support

Both the UN Security Council and IAEA normally have Africa representation. Togo and Rwanda currently serve as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council (between 2010 and 2011 Gabon and Nigeria served in this position). South Africa has held a Security Council seat both between 2007 and 2008, and again between 2010 and 2011, with Uganda serving in the interim. Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania also currently serve on the IAEA Board of Governors, and in recent years Niger and Kenya have also served there. The countries listed largely coincide with the emphasis of Iran's Africa outreach.

Iranian diplomats have long sought to cultivate South Africa. The Islamic Republic's opposition to Apartheid set the foundation for warm ties after the restoration of diplomatic relations in 1994. Iranian supply of oil to South Africa has heightened economic



Continued: *Africa: Iran's Final Frontier?*

relations. For Tehran, however, trade is not the only factor in Iran's desire to have good relations. "South Africa is a key member of the Non-Aligned Movement, a bloc of developing countries that has resisted the efforts to force Tehran to halt uranium enrichment," a commentary in the official Tehran Times explained.⁷

Iranian attempts to leverage its relationship with South Africa into support on the Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors paid dividends.⁸ Despite the February 2008 IAEA report that found that the Islamic Republic continued to enrich uranium in violation of its Safeguards Agreement and two Security Council Resolutions,⁹ the South African government used its position on the Security Council to oppose further sanctions.¹⁰

Whether South African advocacy for Iran is sincere or cynical, the African state reaps benefits. While the international community sought to constrain Iranian sales and thereby the Islamic Republic's income, South Africa refused to cooperate. In 2010 Iranian crude accounted for 25 percent of South Africa's oil, much of it at discounted prices.¹¹ Most recently, South Africa threw a last-minute wrench into an IAEA resolution criticizing Iran's failure to comply with Security Council resolutions.¹² South African authorities have been helpful to the Islamic Republic in other ways: the U.S. Treasury Department has accused South Africa's cell phone company MTN of helping Iran skirt prohibitions on imports of U.S. technology.¹³

South Africa is not alone. After Togo announced its intention to seek a UN Security Council seat, Tehran's outreach to the tiny West African nation increased. In September 2010 Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad met Togolese Foreign Minister Elliott Ohin. "An extensive and profound cooperation between Iran and Africa will go a long way to modify international relations and regional balance," Ahmadinejad declared.¹⁴ Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki reciprocated the visit the following month.¹⁵ Fourteen months later, in January 2012, Mottaki's successor Salehi met Ohin at the 18th African Union summit and promised that the Islamic Republic would help develop Togo.¹⁶ Indeed, after successive visits by both U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her Iranian counterpart, the Togolese opposition was quite open about how the two powers court the oft-forgotten, emphasizing the appeal of the Iranian approach.¹⁷



Sifiso Dabengwa, Group President and CEO of MTN Group, via <http://www.technologytimesng.com>



Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki, via <http://www.topnews.in>

Once again, however, strings appear to have been attached to Iranian assistance. When Yemeni authorities accused Iran of supporting the Houthis (the Shi'ite minority fighting an anti-government insurgency in northern Yemen), the Iranians denied responsibility. The ship intercepted with weaponry was actually Togolese, Iranian authorities explained.¹⁸

The same pattern held true with Gabon. Shortly before Gabon ascended to the Security Council, it became the subject of intense Iranian courtship. In May 2009 the Gabonese culture minister visited Tehran carrying a veritable wish-list of projects for Iran to subsidize or provide.¹⁹ Later that month, Gabonese Foreign Minister Paul Toungui visited Tehran, where he signed a host of agreements to expand and facilitate business.²⁰ Early the next year, Gabonese President Ali Ben Bongo Ondimba met Mottaki on the sidelines of the African Union conference. Mottaki reiterated Iran's desire to expand political and economic ties with Gabon.²¹ Two months later, Gabon used its seat to support Iran's nuclear program.²²

Continued: Africa: Iran's Final Frontier?

Nigeria's role in both the Security Council and at the IAEA translated into sustained Iranian outreach. Nigeria might be oil-rich, but with a dysfunctional economy leaving most Nigerians impoverished, it welcomed any foreign investment to create jobs. Instead of supplying oil—Iran's strategy of first resort to countries whose support Tehran wants—Tehran offered to manufacture Iranian automobiles in Nigeria,²³ providing poorer Nigerians with assembly line jobs and perhaps giving Iranian agents cover to operate in the region. Iranian engineers also helped Nigeria bolster its own production, lending Iranian engineering expertise to Nigerian efforts to explore offshore gas fields.²⁴ During a subsequent visit to Nigeria, Salehi sweetened the commercial pot further, with promises of preferential tariff reductions and bolstered trade.²⁵

The Iranian government did not hesitate to leverage its investment.²⁶ As with Togo and Gabon, however, there also appears to have been a more nefarious side to the Iranian presence. The seizure of crates of weaponry at the Port of Lagos in 2010 exposed Iran's strategy to leverage its African partners for strategic objectives.²⁷ Summoned by the Nigerian foreign minister after Nigerian customs seized the arms shipment, the Iranian ambassador explained that the arms were destined for Gambia as part of an earlier agreement. When the Nigerian government asked why, then, the Iranians had labeled the sealed containers as building material, the Iranian ambassador shrugged off the question and instead blamed the private shipping company.²⁸ That same year the U.S. Treasury Department issued an advisory regarding the tendency of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL)—already subject to sanctions—to utilize fraudulent documents in its operations.²⁹

The Quest for Uranium

Another factor behind Iran's nuclear drive may be its developing nuclear program. The Iranian leadership has said it seeks up to 16 nuclear reactors for civilian energy purposes.³⁰ Should Iran build such a network, it will deplete its limited indigenous uranium supply within ten years.³¹ Regardless of Iran's nuclear motivation, two things are clear: Iran has at present no intention of abandoning its nuclear drive, and it will also never have true energy security. Its quest to find alternate sources of uranium may also bring it back to Africa.

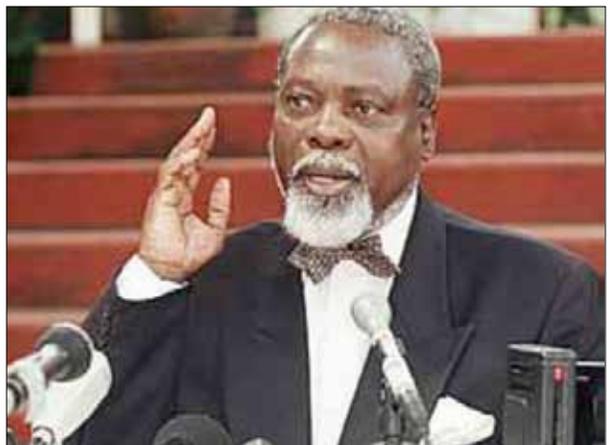
A number of African states mine uranium: Namibia and Niger are major uranium exporters. Malawi and Gabon operate uranium mines. South Africa produces some uranium as a byproduct of gold mining, and prospecting continues across the continent. Uranium deposits exist in Togo, Guinea, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.³² Iran seeks to cultivate many of these states.

Hence, in April 2010 Centrafrique-presse Online, a Central African Republic website affiliated with Ange-Félix Patassé, that country's ousted president, suggested that Foreign Minister Antoine Gambi had traveled to Tehran to negotiate the Iranian purchase of Central African yellowcake. While Patassé has motivation to cast suspicion on the man who ousted him in a coup, his speculation that there could be "a Bangui-Caracas-Tehran-Pyongyang axis trafficking in uranium" in the making might raise anxiety.³³

In theory, while international controls prevent African states from exporting uranium absent transparency, the reality is that poor infrastructure and corruption can enable illicit trade. In 2007, for example, Congolese authorities arrested Fortunat Lumu, director of the Atomic



Gabonese President Ali Ben Bongo Ondimba, via <http://www.republicoftogo.com>



Ange-Félix Patassé, via <http://beaugasorain.blogspot.com>

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Energy Center, in an investigation involving missing uranium.³⁴

While visits by Iranian officials to the West African country of Guinea were relatively scarce a decade ago, Tehran has taken more interest in Conakry since the discovery of commercially-viable uranium deposits in 2007. In 2010 Mottaki announced a 140 percent increase in Iran-Guinea trade, for which the mining sector accounted for the greatest proportion.³⁵ Recent Iranian outreach to Gambia, Malawi, Namibia, and Uganda also coincides with the discovery of uranium in those countries. In January 2008, for example, Gambian President Yahya Jammeh announced the discovery of uranium.³⁶ While Ahmadinejad had visited Banjul in 2006 for an African Union summit, he returned in the year following the announcement for further discussions with Jammeh.³⁷



Gambian President Yahya Jammeh, via <http://www.vigworld.net>

Likewise, Uganda announced its uranium discovery in 2004. While commercial relations between Iran and Uganda remained dormant under the presidencies of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997) and Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), that changed in subsequent years. Visiting Tehran in 2009, Uganda President Yoweri Museveni met not only with his counterpart, but also with Iran's minister of mining. The Kampala-based Daily Monitor reported "strong indication that the two leaders discussed prospects of exploiting Uganda's uranium resources, which Mr. Museveni has often said would only be used for the generation of energy."³⁸

The Quest for a Base

A third goal for Iranian outreach to Africa may be a quest to establish its own "string of pearls," that is, if not de facto bases which could provide Iran logistical support and allow it to extend its naval reach, then pivotal states upon which it can rely to advance strategic and ideological objectives, the role that Venezuela plays for Iran in South America.

Initially, Iranian authorities cultivated Senegal. There is no indication that the two states ever openly discussed formal bases, but the Islamic Republic did develop closer relations with Senegal than it did with other African states. Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal between 2000 and 2012, met repeatedly not only with Ahmadinejad but also Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.³⁹ The Senegalese foreign and defense ministers also visited their Iranian counterparts.⁴⁰ Senior Iranian officials have reciprocated the visits.⁴¹

The Senegalese leadership seemed interested in reaping the benefits from its Iranian courtship. "Energy, Oil Prospecting, Industry: Senegal benefits from Iranian solutions," the official government newspaper declared after Wade's first visit to Tehran.⁴² After the reciprocal Iranian visit, Wade announced that Iran would build an oil refinery, chemical plant, and an \$80 million car assembly plant in the West Africa nation.⁴³ Within weeks Samuel Sarr, Senegal's Energy Minister, visited Tehran and returned with a pledge that Iran would supply Senegal with oil for a year and purchase a 34-percent stake in Senegal's oil refinery.⁴⁴ Such aid may not have come without strings attached. On 25 November 2007, during the third meeting of the Iran-Senegal joint economic commission, Wade endorsed Iran's nuclear program.⁴⁵ Wade's visit to Iran the following year provided a backdrop for Khamenei to declare that developing unity between Islamic countries like Senegal and Iran can weaken "the great powers" like the United States.⁴⁶

On 27 January 2008, a week after Foreign Minister Cheikh Tidiane Gadio announced he too would visit Tehran, Defense Minister Becaye Diop met with his Iranian counterpart to discuss expanding bilateral defense ties between the two states.⁴⁷ While Iranian Navy Chief Habibollah Sayyari is prone to hyperbole, Senegal could have brought to reality—at least symbolically—his pledge to have Iran establish a presence in the Atlantic.⁴⁸

Bilateral relations suffered a significant setback, however, in 2011 when Senegalese authorities accused Iran of smuggling arms to rebels in Senegal's restive Casamance region.⁴⁹ If the Senegalese allegations were true—Iran hotly denied them and accused foreign intelligence of fabricating evidence⁵⁰—then it might have reflected lack of coordination among various Iranian security elements. The Ministry of Intelligence, the Qods Force, and the Foreign Ministry have, on occasion, run foreign operations at odds with each other

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and broader Iranian policy.⁵¹ Regardless, the break in relations was only temporary. On 7 February 2013 Tehran and Dakar restored bilateral ties, although whether Senegal will pursue as effusive an embrace of Iran under Wade's successor Macky Sall is far from clear.⁵²

While its relations with Senegal were in stasis, Iran's courtship with Sudan reached new levels. The Islamic Republic is willing to embrace any African state estranged from the West. In the past this was the basis for ties between Iran and Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe (which in recent years has also become a uranium producer).⁵³ Iranian officials apparently have also found Sudan ripe for picking.⁵⁴

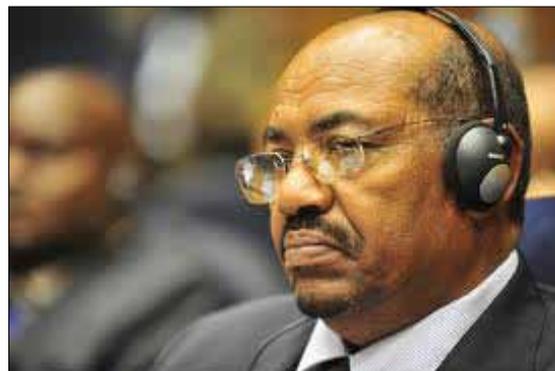
Both European governments and the United States have sought to isolate Sudan because of its role in Darfur genocide; on 4 March 2009 the International Criminal Court issued an indictment for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.⁵⁵ As the international community tightened sanctions upon Khartoum, Ahmadinejad moved to embrace Bashir, visiting the country before and after Bashir's indictment.⁵⁶ Iran's defense minister visited Khartoum and called the African state "the cornerstone" of the Islamic Republic's Africa policies.⁵⁷

Indeed, as the Syrian regime—since 1979 Iran's only loyal ally—has teetered, Iranian authorities have increased military cooperation with Sudan. Twice in late 2012 Iranian naval ships docked at Port Sudan, on the Red Sea.⁵⁸ While Sudanese officials have denied any military alliance between Tehran and Khartoum,⁵⁹ there is widespread speculation that Israel might have conducted an airstrike on Sudan, targeting Iranian arms.⁶⁰

Iranian officials have denied rumors that the Islamic Republic has also established bases in the littoral Red Sea nation of Eritrea, a country which has both endorsed Iran's nuclear program and also suffered increasingly strained ties with the West because of its increasingly dismal human rights record.⁶¹ (Eritrea is the only country to rank below North Korea in press freedom, according to Reporters Without Frontiers.)⁶² Iran explains its presence in regional waters as part of its own anti-piracy operations, although Iranian officials tend to exaggerate their own operations.⁶³

Conclusion

While supposition is not proof of Iranian aims, there does appear to be determined Iranian outreach to Africa. At best, Tehran appears to be leveraging aid and soft power in exchange for diplomatic favors; at worst, some elements in the Islamic Republic appear to be utilizing Africa as cover for other military or nuclear objectives. Either way, the Iranian government has shown that its self-description as an "extra-regional" power is no longer rhetorical exaggeration, but will instead increasingly challenge U.S. aims across Africa.



Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, via <http://www.algemeiner.com>

1. "Obama Speaks to the Muslim World," Interview with Hisham Melham, Al-Arabiya Television, January 28, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2009/01/27/DI2009012702783.html>
2. "Biden Raises Possibility of Direct U.S.-Iran Talks," Reuters, February 3, 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/03/us-iran-nuclear-idUSBRE91107720130203>
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