

Foreign Military Studies Office

OEWATCH



FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Special Essay:

**The Significance
of Changes in**

RUSSIA'S MILITARY DOCTRINE

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“...we hope that eventually our Army will become fully professional.”

~ Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu

Source: Roman Kretsul, “Military Service Under Contract Becomes Main Form in Russian Army,” Vzglyad Online, 28 April 2015, <http://www.vz.ru/society/2015/4/28/742706.html>, accessed 15 May 2015.

OE Watch Commentary: *The accompanying article discusses the recent enlistment of the 300,000th contract soldier in the Russian military. Contract service has long been a contentious issue for the Russian military. The idea of a fully contract army was never popular with many in the Russian defense establishment, who were troubled by the implications of the diminished capability for total war mobilization that the abandonment of conscription raises. There is also a belief that professional armies are not suitable for prolonged military conflict, as military service becomes much less popular as body counts rise.*

Previous Defense Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov abandoned the idea of a fully contract army during his tenure, one of the few things that he did that appealed to the old-school thinkers in the defense establishment who desperately wanted to maintain the “old” capabilities for mass mobilization. Interestingly, as the accompanying article mentions, the current, and very popular Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu mentions: “We hope that eventually our Army will become fully professional.” This statement is puzzling, considering the patriotic fervor enveloping Russia now, and is a marked departure from commentary about this issue from all other senior leaders in the Russian defense establishment. As the adoption of a fully contract army is extremely unlikely for many reasons, the purpose of these comments from the politically astute Shoygu can only be surmised. End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

Military Service Under Contract Becomes Main Form in Russian Army

Sergey Shoygu has expressed the hope that one day the Russian Army will become fully professional. The number of contract personnel in the Russian Federation Armed Forces already exceeds the number of draftees. Does this mean that Russia has acquired the financial potential to maintain a professional army -- and how will a fully contract-based method of managing affect combat readiness?

On Tuesday Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu welcomed Pavel Sidorov, the 300,000th contract member of the Russian Army. The head of the department presented the professional soldier entering into service with a marine beret and an all-season set of field uniform. “With your arrival we have more people in contract service than in service under the draft,” the minister told him. “And this figure will gradually increase; we hope that eventually our Army will become fully professional.”

The minister added that at present there are 300,000 contract personnel serving in the Russian Federation Armed Forces, as against 276,000 “draftees.” Under plans made public by the military department last year, by 2017 there should be up to half a million contract personnel in the Armed Forces.

Shoygu is the first official of such high rank in many years to talk about the possibility of building a fully professional army in Russia. This subject was popular in the 1990s when, in the context of the collapse of the army, the theft of state property, and reports on what the conditions of service were like at the time, masses of young people started to perceive what Yeltsin’s subordinates said about military duty as a mockery. Yeltsin himself even said that the draft would be abolished by the year 2000. However, when that time came, Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov, who was appointed in 2001, stated: After analyzing foreign experience it was decided to stay with the mixed principle of manning.

The first experience of recruiting contract personnel left negative impressions with both the military and civilians: People were basically recruited for war, and those wishing to become professional soldiers were dispatched not to regular units but to the Caucasus. Subsequently there were a great many scandals involving the nonpayment of combat supplements, theft, and so forth...

... if contract personnel already account for more than half, what is stopping the remaining service members serving under the draft from being replaced?

First, the financial component plays an important role. The failure to fulfill the promises of the 1990s, like everything that happened back then, was attributed to the shortage of money in the budget. It is true that the burden is large -- a contract army, as Vzglyad newspaper wrote recently, is a costly system and a large proportion of countries that possess numerically large forces still maintain the draft.

(continued)

Continued: The Future of Contract Service in the Russian Federation?

Money and Apartments

If you look at the expenditure from the viewpoint of contract personnel's monetary pay, a new recruit in Russia receives, depending on the conditions of service, something like 20,000 [\$292] rubles, and a sergeant with several years' service about 30,000. Taking an average figure of 25,000 [\$490] and multiplying it by 276,000 posts, we get 6.9 billion rubles -- that is approximately the amount by which expenditure on pay would increase if the army became fully contract-manned. It is a lot, but compared with the military budget for this year -- 3.28 trillion rubles -- the figures do not appear far-fetched.

There are other expenses too, of course: social payments, bonuses, and most important, infrastructure. In fact this was one of the reasons why the recruitment of contract personnel was difficult in the last decade. A service member may tolerate a low income and difficult conditions of service, but it turned out that not many people wanted to live in the barracks with their family. However, it has recently been possible to increase the official housing stock as a result of the reduction in troop units and the restructuring of military camps.

“The problem is not only pay,” Viktor Murakhovskiy, chief editor of the journal Arsenal Otechestva, told Vzgljad newspaper. “Concessionary terms for providing permanent housing are important instruments. As far as official housing is concerned, this work is under way, but I think it will take several more years to ensure that all our permanent deployment posts are fully provided with official housing...”

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

By Ray Finch, FMSO

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

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



C2, Combat Support, and Strategic Mobility of Russia's Troops in Eastern Ukraine

29 April 2015

OE Watch Commentary: *The accompanying article discusses some of the Russian military's recent innovations and problems regarding activities near Eastern Ukraine.*

In terms of strategic mobility, Russia has apparently made significant improvements from 2008, when it had difficulties massing combat power for the Russo-Georgian War. After the conflict, the Russian Ground Forces began regular mobilization exercises that moved entire brigades hundreds and sometimes thousands of kilometers from their garrisons to training areas. The combination of these exercises and the downsizing of the Ground Forces from divisions to brigades has made unit mobilization significantly more manageable and has allowed Russia to more easily mass and rotate forces through conflict.

Although the mobilization of complete brigades is possible, Russia prefers to utilize combined arms battalions, also called battalion tactical groups (BTG), as the preferred instrument for projecting the Russian Ground Forces' combat power into an area. As the accompanying article states, the BTGs have been effective, but there are problems. Combat support and combat service support capabilities are lagging, a situation that is being blamed upon the previous defense minister, who abolished some maintenance and logistic units in favor of private contractors. These reforms are now being "walked back," but problems are ongoing, especially regarding maintenance issues.

*Despite references from the West about "hybrid warfare" and the rampant use of special operations forces, Russia's activities appear quite conventional. As the accompanying graphic on the next page, derived from a 20 April Ukrainian article on Russian troops in/near Eastern Ukraine, describes, Russian forces are primarily conventional units from the Ground Forces, Naval Infantry, and Airborne. Undoubtedly, Spetsnaz elements are engaged in Eastern Ukraine, but they are but a small part of Russian capabilities in the area. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Source: Aleksey Ramm, "The Ukraine Test: New Image of Armed Forces Spoiled by Field Kitchens," *Voyenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer Online*, 29 April 2015, <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/25027>, accessed 6 May 2015.

The Ukraine Test: New Image of Armed Forces Spoiled by Field Kitchens

Did the Russian Army cope with the tasks set before it during the conflict in the southeast of Ukraine? The topic of the participation of Russia's Armed Forces in the events in the Donets Basin has become one of the favorite subjects in foreign mass media... We acknowledge the following as a fact: our Armed Forces, without crossing the border and without participating in conflicts with the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Ukrainian National Guard and Ministry of Internal Affairs of the neighboring state, are exerting substantial influence on what is happening in the southeast by virtue of their presence near the theater of military operations...

The Effect of "Team Contracting"

A *Voyenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer* correspondent managed to visit several officers of the staffs of the Central and North Caucasus Military Districts who unanimously noted that no problems had surfaced with the planning and organization of the transportation of the forces and assets belonging to either the command staffs of the units and subunits, nor (especially) of those belonging to the military command and control organizations. "Beginning in 2009 we constantly practiced transporting various units and subunits to great distances. Therefore, in March and April of last year we encountered no special problems in this respect, even taking into consideration the fact that a large number of units and subunits were transported not only by railroad, but were moved out, as they say, on their own power via highways," recalls a staff officer of one of the military districts... Immediately after the brigade was unloaded the regiments and the BTGs completed long marches to reach the designated regions...

It should be noted that each brigade and BTG was assigned officers of the staffs of the armies and districts from where these units and subunits originated. "This was the way it was even before the new "new look" reforms [reference to the massive military reforms started around 2008], but now the assigned officers assume much of the work of the staffs of the brigades and battalions, assisting the chiefs of the combat arms and services. After all, following the cuts to the positions in the staffs there simply were not enough people to fully cope with the assigned tasks," believes a *Voyenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer* source.

It is true that modern means of communications and automated command and control systems, with which practically all of the command and control brigades and battalions were equipped, greatly facilitated the work of the staffs. "The communications were constant. Moreover, there was an uninterrupted exchange of information, which was even in on-line mode where it was needed," recalls an officer of the North Caucasus Military District staff...

(continued)

RUSSIA

Continued: C2, Combat Support, and Strategic Mobility of Russia's Troops in Eastern Ukraine



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Continued: C2, Combat Support, and Strategic Mobility of Russia's Troops in Eastern Ukraine

Dirty Laundry

The greatest problems in both force groupings appeared in the supply and logistics system, especially in weapons and military equipment repairs, which until recently were the responsibility of firms which had signed contracts with “Spetsremont,” part of “Oboronservis,” under so-called “out-sourcing” conditions...

“Units and subunits were suddenly put on alert and left for Rostovskaya Oblast. The firms responsible for the repairs of weapons and military equipment proved not to be ready to solve tasks that were several thousand kilometers away from their offices and facilities. It’s one thing to fix equipment at a garrison, a few kilometers from your garages, but it is entirely another matter when it is necessary to allocate and dispatch repair groups virtually to the other end of the country,” as an officer responsible for supply and logistics support in the Far East Military District described the situation... “Repair units organic to the brigades, as well as those attached to the battalion tactical groups, are not able to fully execute everything that they are responsible for...” complained an officer responsible for supply and logistics in one of the brigades of the Central Military District.

The management of feeding, washing and providing personnel with bathhouse and laundry services has become another serious problem. It cannot be said that unwashed personnel in dirty clothing were starving in the steppes near Rostov, Kursk and Belgorod, but there were problems... “Very recently we were told that the firms would feed everyone and provide bathing and laundry services in the field. I don’t even want to talk about what rubbish this is. Everything, as is usually the case, fell into the laps of the battalion and brigade commanders and their MTO [Combat Support and Combat Service Support] deputies... “The commander and the staff of a brigade supply and logistics support battalion proved to be the most overloaded officers. And we must come to grips with repairs, and vehicles must be immediately dispatched for hauling property, food products and petroleum, oils, and lubricants... The workload on the officers is simply colossal,” summarized an officer of one of the North Caucasus Military District brigades.

Short and Localized Disconcerting Results: Or What Events in Ukraine Showed Us

Over a matter of days units able to fulfill the assigned tasks were redeployed from various regions of Russia, frequently from several thousands of kilometers. It should be noted that one of the innovations of the former Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army Nikolay Makarov, was the conducting of brigade, and sometimes battalion live firing exercises not at their home training ranges (in which every knoll was familiar), but at unfamiliar ranges sometimes located great distances away. The brigades demonstrated high mobility during transport to other regions. Brigades and battalions from all four military districts were included. Due to objective reasons the Russian Army fortunately did not have to participate in armed conflict. Therefore the extent to which the brigade would be effective in combined arms battle can only be evaluated theoretically...

Source: Aleksey Mikhaylov, "Who May Fire the Sniper Rifle?" *Voyenno-Promyshlenny Kuryer*, 13 May 2015, <<http://vpk-news.ru/articles/25170>>, accessed 15 May 2015

OE Watch Commentary: *In the West the terms "spetsnaz" (spetsialnogo naznacheniya) and "special operations forces" (sil spetsialnykh operatsiy) are used as synonyms. In the Russian military system all special operations forces are spetsnaz, but not all spetsnaz are special operations forces.*

Spetsnaz (Russian спецназ) can roughly be translated as "special designation," referring to troops with a special purpose. The word "special" is used in a very broad way that can indicate that the unit has a very narrow area of specialization, such as signals intelligence, engineering, reconnaissance, etc., or the unit is experimental or temporary in nature; or the unit conducts tasks of special importance, such as sensitive political or clandestine operations. This broad usage of the term means that "spetsnaz" cannot be thought of as equating to the Western concept of special operations forces (SOF).

There are many units in Russia's Armed Forces and militarized internal security and intelligence units with the designation of "spetsnaz," but when the term is used in reference to the Armed Forces of the Ministry of Defense it typically refers to the troops serving in any of Russia's seven GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate) Spetsnaz Brigades, the Navy Combat Swimmers, or the VDV's (Airborne) 45th Spetsnaz Regiment. These are some of Russia's best military units, along with the rest of the VDV, and can be thought of as true "snake eaters." The Spetsnaz brigades are the most numerous of these forces, functioning as the eyes and ears of the General Staff, having the capability to perform deep reconnaissance and conduct direct action missions behind enemy lines.

Although Russian Spetsnaz units are elite units and conduct of the missions that SOF carry out, there are significant differences between the organizations. In general, the GRU Spetsnaz are not intended to act independently: they are seen as an elite force that performs missions (reconnaissance,

Who May Fire the Sniper Rifle?

For several years Spetsnaz units have endured an amazing cycle of development: from serious cuts and resubordinations to the formation of new brigades and even battalions and being reequipped with the latest models of weapons and military equipment, means of communications, and reconnaissance and monitoring devices. But even despite the successful operations of "the polite people" in the Crimea, Russian Spetsnaz troops have rather many serious problems...

Brigades Growing Wild

"The experience of counter-terrorist operations in the North Caucasus proved that it is time for Spetsnaz subunits to transfer to a much broader spectrum of tasks."

...According to the initial plan approved by the former Chief of the General Staff, it was sufficient for a group of 12 men to have two or three contract servicemen, the deputy commander of the group, a sniper and a communicator. As the special subunit soldiers themselves say, first they broke everything, and then they began building a new system, without understanding what they wanted as the ultimate result...

It must be noted that as part of each combined arms and airborne assault brigade (regiment) there is a company of snipers which officially appears as a Special Forces subunit. Moreover, in the North Caucasus 8th, 18th, and 19th Motorized Rifle Brigades, in addition to the sniper companies and the Spetsnaz battalions there are also sniper groups, or motorized rifle Spetsnaz brigades as they are called in the North Caucasus Military District.

Despite the return of Spetsnaz units and subunits to the structure of the Main Intelligence Directorate, a paradoxical situation emerged concerning their subordination. For example, the Spetsnaz brigades are subordinate to the GRU, but the various battalions and companies are simultaneously subordinate to the commanders of the brigades and to the army and district chiefs of intelligence, and in some cases to the chief of staff and personally to the district commander. Meanwhile the GRU is responsible for their training, as well as under certain conditions, for their combat application.

Something of a Rambo, not a Soldier

In point of fact, over the last two years within the Armed Forces of Russia a sort of "Spetsnazization" has been occurring, while Spetsnaz subunits have appeared even in motorized rifle and tank brigades. It is understandable that requirements have grown multifold not only for trained reconnaissance troops, but also for communicators, special mine disposal personnel, etc...

...as Spetsnaz officers acknowledge, the main problem is the small percentage of contract servicemen, especially in the newly formed sniper companies, as well as in the Spetsnaz companies and battalions. Sometimes there are only two or three contract soldiers for several dozen draftees. In the Spetsnaz brigades the personnel situation is not much better,

(continued)

Continued: Differentiating Special Operations Forces from Spetsnaz

direct action, etc.) to further the movement and maneuver of the rest of the conventional Armed Forces. In short, Russian Spetsnaz brigades are doctrinally and logistically bound to the Armed Forces and are not intended for the independent operations that Western special operation forces conduct.

In 2013, Russia announced the creation of Special Operations Command (Komandovanie Sil Spetsialnykh Operatsiy) within the Russian General Staff. Presumably the troops under this new command may more closely mirror Western SOF. For more information on Russian Special Operations Forces see: http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/OEWatch/201304/Russia_02.html and http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/OEWatch/201306/Russia_01.html

Interestingly, as the accompanying article discusses, Spetsnaz do not receive the cream of the crop in terms of personnel. Spetsnaz units often have higher percentages of conscripts than other elite units such as the VDV because in the Russian hierarchy of elites, Spetsnaz are seen as less elite than more conventional units such as the VDV and naval infantry. Apparently, the confusion between Spetsnaz and SOF is not just a problem for Westerners who are observing the Russian military. As the author laments, "Let military reconnaissance remain reconnaissance, without any sort of 'special' prefix. This does not detract from its value."

*Although Spetsnaz and Russian SOF elements will play a role in current and future conflicts, conventional forces will retain primacy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Return the Status

After something less than six years of cuts and reorganizations the Spetsnaz units and subunits have proliferated, even as part of the combined arms brigades. It is true that "Spetsnazization" has still created a large number of difficulties: there is the lack of a governing structure and trained specialists... So let military reconnaissance remain reconnaissance, without any sort of "special" prefix. This does not detract from its value.

although there the commanders have exerted maximum effort since the creation of the new image to keep the nucleus of the military teams that were formed...

Until recent times of the four companies and separate platoons in the detachments of the Spetsnaz brigades only one company was fully staffed by contractors, without counting individual servicemen (specifically armored personnel carrier drivers, communications, mine specialists, etc.). All of the remaining subunits consisted of draftees. Understandably, they did not attempt to attract draftees to fulfill combat tasks. Therefore they could only with difficulty stand up one Spetsnaz detachment consisting of three Special Forces companies, a special weapons company, and individual platoons to meet the brigade's mission requirements.. It is true that currently the decision has been made to "not spread a thin layer" of contract servicemen throughout an entire brigade (battalion), but to form a so-called contract detachment or company...

Soldiers of a Non-traditional War

Not only have the structure and the staff of Spetsnaz units and subunits endured changes, but the missions have changed as well. Despite the fact that the documents specifying the combat application of the Spetsnaz remain under "Secret" and even "Top Secret" classification, it can be learned from open sources that one of the main tasks of Spetsnaz units and subunits is the conducting of so-called special reconnaissance. This includes not only monitoring, but also conducting ambushes, raids and searches deep in the rear of the enemy. Operations in local conflict zones have now been added to these tasks...

The experience of counter-terrorist operations in the North Caucasus proved that it is time to transition Spetsnaz subunits from special reconnaissance to work in a much broader spectrum. According to various reports there are new sections governing assigned tasks in the new combat regulation for Spetsnaz units...the annexation of Crimea last year again proved that the Spetsnaz is not just reconnaissance in the enemy's rear, but it is also an instrument for resolving complex military and political tasks...

It must be acknowledged that the overwhelming majority of the newly formed Spetsnaz units and subunits are not really Spetsnaz units, but they are some sort of military reconnaissance organizations with enhanced capabilities. But the success of the "polite people" in the Crimea has led the leadership of the Ministry of Defense to a paradoxical conclusion. Instead of organizing the chaotic mass of different Spetsnaz companies, battalions and regiments and clearly differentiating tasks and zones of responsibility among them, the "Spetsnazization" is being continued...

Source: “Russian Federation State Armaments Programs: The Problems of Execution and the Optimization Potential,” Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, April 2015, http://www.cast.ru/files/Report_CAST.pdf, accessed 15 May 2015.

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying excerpts of a report from the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies outline the Russian Ground Forces section of the State Armaments Program 2020 (GPV 2020). Interestingly, the report mentions some “lessons learned” from the Ukrainian perspective on the importance of serviceable equipment and appropriate war material supplies in sustained conflict.

Despite recent economic troubles, it appears that efforts to increase Russian conventional and strategic (nuclear) capabilities are still progressing, albeit at a slower pace. It has also been reported that the next armaments program, State Armaments Program 2016-2025, may be delayed for three years, the obvious culprit being the current economic situation which is causing some disagreements in the government if these funds would be better spent on shoring up the banking sector. Although it is unlikely that all of the additions as displayed in the attached graphic will be implemented by 2020, Russia is adding new equipment to the ranks.

*In the past, the Russian Federation was somewhat notorious for announcing the adoption of new equipment into the ranks, and then not being able to follow through. This does not appear to be happening in today's Russia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Russian Federation State Armaments Programs: The Problems of Execution and the Optimization Potential

The Priority Equipping of the Ground Troops

The civil war in Ukraine of 2014-2015, despite all of the specificity of the combat operations in the Donbass, graphically demonstrated the scale of combat and losses even in a limited land war under contemporary conditions. During the course of combat operations, the Ukrainian Side suffered unexpectedly large losses of weapons and military equipment. As a result, Ukraine, which until quite recently was actively selling surplus Soviet weapons, has begun to feverishly remove from mothballs and attempt to repair old equipment (which turned out to be a difficult and very expensive task). What is more, Kyiv has been compelled to begin to import weapons and military equipment. To replenish losses in personnel, Ukraine has had to announce several waves of partial mobilization.

The Ukrainian conflict has become graphic evidence of the importance of the armed forces reserve components and the fact that there isn't much military equipment in storage and in reserve. So, the buildup and storage of reserves of equipment and weapons appears to be relevant as before, which requires stable and adequately large volume purchases of it.

The enormous percentage of equipment that malfunctioned in the Ukrainian Army with obsolete and worn out materiel (with a service life of no less than 25 years) demonstrated (like the Russian Army's previous experience in the 2008 Five-Day War with Georgia) that in combat operations the service life of military equipment very often has priority over its formal combat specifications. Serviceable and new (or overhauled and modernized) equipment, even if it is obsolete, is radically better in an engagement than worn out equipment with an “exhausted” service life, in which it is impossible to fight, and which yields plenty of noncombat losses...

The requirements on the initiation of the large-scale series production of the tank and other vehicles based upon the Armata platform that the Ministry of Defense has set forth are impractical beginning in 2015 and the full-fledged series production of these vehicles will most likely begin no earlier than 2018-2020. The need to concentrate the efforts of the military department and industry on finishing this platform remains a fundamentally important issue... The Armata Platform, which today provides qualitative supremacy over any foreign tank, must be regarded as the absolutely priority program with regard to both the completion of the experimental design work and also placement in series production and purchases...

Everything that has been said also applies in full measure to the two other families of new generation armored vehicles that have been developed in Russia within GPV-2020. This is the Kurganets-25 medium tracked platform (the family consists of the B-11 armored infantry vehicle (“Object 695”) and a tracked armored transport vehicle (“Object 693”) and the Bumerang medium wheeled platform with 8X8 configuration (armored transport vehicle). This vehicle must replace the hopelessly obsolete and poorly

armored BMP-1 and BMP-2 armored infantry vehicles and the BTR-70 and BTR-80 armored transport vehicles in the troops. The conflict in Ukraine has shown that the BMP-1/BMP-2 are close to a total loss of their combat significance and are suffering heavy losses.

The development of the Armata, Kurganets-25 and Bumerang platforms signifies a serious shift of the paradigm in the development of domestic armored vehicles. A new generation of armored vehicles with more balanced specifications, first of all with increased attention to the level of protection and insuring the survivability of the personnel, is arriving to replace the Soviet vehicles, in the development of which the emphasis was made on mobility and firepower to the detriment of armor protection...

(continued)

Continued: Report on Russian Arms Procurements

The need to reequip Russian Ground Troops artillery, which is massively equipped with obsolete models of self-propelled and towed artillery and multiple rocket launcher systems that have exhausted their service lives that have been designated by the calendar, is being just as urgently sensed... a large portion of Russian artillery is not equipped with state-of-the-art automated fire control systems and state-of-the-art artillery reconnaissance systems and precision-guided munitions exist in insignificant quantities...

On the whole, the reequipping of the Russian Ground Troops must be regarded as the primary task during the realization of the second five-year portion of GPV-2020 (2016-2020) and during the elaboration of the new State Armaments Program. This must affect the entire spectrum of Ground Troops' weapons and equipment, including transport vehicles, advanced individual gear, clothing, small arms and infantry weapons, air defense and antitank weapons, command and control, reconnaissance and communications systems, electronic countermeasures equipment, engineer, medical and rear services equipment, and so forth. We need to regard equipping the Ground Troops as the priority in the GPV with regard to any other branches of the Armed Forces and types of troops (with the exception of, perhaps, the Strategic Rocket Forces (RVSN)...

The Russian Federation National Defense Budget Items in Billions of Rubles

Designation	2012	2013	2014	2015	Percentage of Change from Previous Year		
					2013	2014	2015
Armed Forces	1394.2	1635.7	1903.1	2410.3	117.3	116.3	126.6
Mobilization and Troop Training	7.3	6.79	6.88	6.89	92.8	101.3	100.9
Mobilization Preparation of the Economy	4.89	5.6	5.7	2.7	115.7	100.9	100.9
Training and Participation in Providing Collective Security and Peacekeeping	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Nuclear Weapons Complex	27.4	29.28	33.3	28.57	106.6	113.8	115.7
Implimentation of Internation Treaties Relating to Military-Technical Cooperation	6.58	5.8	5.88	5.99	88.1	102.4	101.8
Applied Science Research in Defense	170.77	198.3	233.9	228.5	116.1	117.9	97.7
Other Defense Issues	253.09	259.59	312.66	381.9	102.6	120.4	122.2

Source: Russian Federation Ministry of Finance

Goals of the 2010 State Armaments Program (GPV 2020)

Branch of Service	Appropriations (in trillions of rubles)	Percentage	Proposed Purchases or Developments
Ground Troops	2.6	15%	2,300 tanks, 2000 artillery pieces, 10 brigade sets of the Iskander missile system, 9 brigade sets of the S-300V4, more than 30,000 motor vehicles
Navy	5.0	25%	8 project 955 nuclear missile submarines, 8 project 885 nuclear attack submarines, 12 nonnuclear submarines, 51 surface ships (including 15 frigates and up to 35 corvettes)
Air Force	4.7	24%	600 aircraft, 1,100 helicopters
Strategic Rocket Forces	1.0	5%	270-280 ICBMs, development of the new Rubezh and Sarmat ICBMs
Aerospace Defense Troops	3.4	17%	56 S-400 battalions, 38 S-500 battalions, 38 S-350 battalions, 120 Pantsir-S, and integrated aerospace defense C2 system, 4 Voronezh radars, 100 spacecraft
Other and Interbranch	2.7	14%	New Communications, C2, and reconnaissance systems
Total	19.4	100%	

Source: Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies

Russian Airborne Adding Heavy Tanks to the Ranks

6 May 2015

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian Airborne (VDV) significantly differs from its Western counterparts: structurally it is a mechanized force, divided between parachute and air assault units. In terms of function, it fulfills many of the same roles as airborne forces in the West, but it is also used to conduct politically sensitive operations that would be conducted by Western special operation forces.*

The VDV consists of approximately 35,000+ troops split among 4 divisions, 5 separate brigades and a few support units. The recent efforts to increase Russian conventional capabilities have been especially good for the VDV: it recently acquired the four air assault brigades that were under control of the Ground Forces and is in the process of adding a third regiment to the divisional MTO&E and replacing the division reconnaissance companies with battalions. It is also receiving new C2 and electronic warfare equipment, kit, and a slew of new vehicles and armaments.

The accompanying article discusses another change coming to the VDV, the inclusion of main battle tanks in the unit. The use of light tanks such as the PT-76 and Sprut-SD is nothing new, and VDV units occasionally have had tank units attached, but this is the first time that main battle tanks will be included as organic assets to the regiments (within the divisions) and separate brigades. Although the West is increasingly shedding its heavy and mechanized units in favor of special operations forces, Russia still sees tanks and heavy armor as essential enablers, even in units that conduct special operations.

If these MTO&E changes are being made in response to current events in Eastern Ukraine, it could be a sign that Russia expects these activities to last for an extended duration.

End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

Source: Roman Kretsul, "It has been Decided to Augment the Air Drop with Tanks," Vzglyad Online, 06 May 2015, <http://www.vz.ru/society/2015/5/6/743921.html>, accessed 15 May 2015.

The Airborne Troops are being augmented with tanks, if at least the words of the Commander of the Airborne Troops (VDV) can be believed. Previously paratroopers did not have tanks. It is possible that this reference is to airdropped self-propelled artillery mounts, which have tasks that are comparable to those of light tanks. In any event such a decision indicates a change in the Airborne Troops' combat application concept.

Airborne Troops Commander Colonel-General Vladimir Shamanov stated that tanks would appear in the paratroopers' inventory. "In the very near future we plan to acquire tank subunits in order to strengthen firepower," he said to RIA Novosti.

A unit will include from a few vehicles to several dozen combat vehicles and it will structurally belong to a regiment or a brigade. Thus far there have been, in fact, no tank subunits in the VDV. The concept of this combat arm, which was developed during the time of the Soviet Union, envisioned that when necessary the full complement of an airborne division, i.e., down to the last clerk and baker, could be assaulted by parachute into an assigned region.

The same requirements also applied to equipment. The regulation armored vehicles of the paratroopers could be air dropped using parachute systems, but it was impossible to drop tanks weighing several tens of tons in that manner. During the Afghanistan and Chechen Wars tank subunits of the Infantry Troops were temporarily attached to airborne units...

Vzglyad was told by Colonel Valeriy Yuryev, Deputy Chairman of the Central Council of the Paratroopers' Union of Russia that "Although during the time of the Soviet Union paratroopers executed tasks in the rear of the enemy in airdropped equipment, now the VDV is faced with tasks that are in part those of the Infantry Troops. Naturally, providing tanks will raise firepower and the antitank capabilities of VDV units and subunits," noted the paratrooper...

In his words, although in the Soviet Union everyone was air dropped into the rear of the enemy by parachute, now all of the divisions have different organizational structures, based on their tasks depending on the operational area where they are located. For example, the 7th Guards Airborne Assault Division in Novorossiysk is a mountain division. "A parachute assault battalion of this division is air dropped by parachute with its equipment. And there are subunits which may not be air dropped. But the entire personnel of the division is trained to make parachute jumps."

During Soviet times, when the VDV was prepared to assault into the rear of the enemy, rather lengthy battles of paratroopers with combined arms units and formations were not envisioned. Based on firepower an airborne division was significantly inferior to motorized rifle and tank divisions. The "infantry" had many more artillery tubes, and more rocket artillery, heavy armored vehicles, and personnel. Moreover, it had the advantage of a constant flow of ammunition, while at the same time airborne equipment had limited ammunition. "Based on firepower the motorized rifle regiments and divisions were clearly more powerful," said Yuryev. "But when the tanks will be introduced, the capabilities of the VDV will grow."

“Today the Russian Army is in the top five of the world’s best armies. Based upon my calculations, we lag behind only the United States with its fantastic military budget.”

Source: Andrey Ivanov, “In the Opinion of Foreign Analysts, the RF Armed Forces Surpass in Might the Troops of the World’s Leading Countries,” Svobodnaya Online, 10 May 2015. <http://svpressa.ru/war21/article/121165/>, accessed 15 May 2015.

OE Watch Commentary: *Russia’s spectacular 2015 Victory Day Parade showcased an arsenal of new military equipment, including the Bumerang armored personnel carrier, Kurganets-25 infantry fighting vehicle, T-15 heavy IFV infantry fighting vehicle, and the T-14 main battle tank. The parade highlighted a growing nationalism and militarism that is becoming quite popular in Russia. Russia’s recent annexation of Crimea and conduct of activities in Eastern Ukraine have been very popular domestically. Russians are increasingly seeing the military as a way to regain Russia’s “Great Power” status that was lost after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The accompanying article well exemplifies this growing militarism, touting recent Russian military reforms and capabilities. End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)*

In the Opinion of Foreign Analysts, the RF Armed Forces Surpass in Might the Troops of the World’s Leading Countries

..The British Newspaper The Telegraph recently wrote that during the last 15 years, our Army has received the best equipment since the times of the Cold War. Journalists direct attention to the fact that the Russian Armed Forces outstrip the armies of the United States and Great Britain based upon the number of tanks, self-propelled artillery mounts, and multiple rocket launcher systems. The article’s authors write that today Russia has 15,398 tanks, which is two times more than the United States has and 37 times more than the United Kingdom. Based upon artillery, our country surpasses Great Britain by 67 times and the United States by three times. We have a threefold superiority over the United States and a 90-fold superiority over Great Britain in multiple rocket launcher systems. In the process, The Telegraph points out that Russia’s military spending is increasing and the Army’s equipment is being continuously modernized.

“Vladimir Putin has succeeded in strengthening the Army, stabilizing the situation in the Caucasus, and even improving the difficult conditions of the national economy,” the American publication International Business Times writes...

Putin has a vivid recollection of the Chechen Campaign and how they were unable to assemble 50,000 men throughout the entire country. But then again, these were not full-

fledged units and they had to pull out a company here and a battalion there. They assembled 50,000 men with difficulty to defeat the separatist regime in Chechnya. Therefore, the creation of a strong army became a priority of state policy”.

There is a reason why Sergey Borisovich Ivanov became the defense minister under Putin. It is precisely under him that the design developments began, which have been embodied today. He devoted attention to strengthening the Strategic Nuclear Forces...As resources appeared, the country directed funds to reequipping the Armed Forces...The process of strengthening the Army has proceeded very intensively in the last two years, when Sergey Shoygu took charge of the Ministry of Defense. He returned certain Soviet methodologies to the troops, by way of illustration, snap combat readiness inspections of units, which permitted him to assess the actual state of the Army...Correct steps were also made during the time of Anatoliy Serdyukov, although he also remains an unpopular figure.

Today the Russian Army is in the top five of the world’s best armies. Based upon my calculations, we lag behind only the United States with its fantastic military budget. But we are also maintaining parity with the United States in nuclear forces and much has been done to strengthen the general purpose forces in the last two years. We have formed an entire series of structures, which previously did not exist. In particular, the Special Operations Forces appeared, which brilliantly manifested itself during the course of the Crimean events. The Information Operations Troops were created and we can react to cyber threats. We have a capable Arctic troop grouping and the aerospace defense system is being actively built based upon the latest achievements of the domestic military industrial complex.

The main thing that Shoygu has managed to do is to change the moral climate in the Army. Today citizens are once again proud of the Army. People want to serve and this applies to conscripts and contract servicemen. The Armed Forces have once again become a means of social mobility for young people, who stand on patriotic positions. The morale and fitting out of the troops permit us to say that we have an

“We are returning to those times when American pilots and seamen, while encountering our officers in the air and at sea, prefer not to become engaged and withdraw.”

outstanding Army. We are returning to those times when American pilots and seamen, while encountering our officers in the air and at sea, prefer not to become engaged and withdraw. There recently was an incident with the interception of a reconnaissance aircraft, which did not accomplish its missions, and turned around and left, because we displayed our mastery. We recall how American destroyers ran away from the coasts of Crimea after the Russian Armed Forces demonstrated their readiness...

[Andrey Ivanov] What role does patriotic indoctrination play in strengthening the country's defense capability?

[Professor Boris Usvyatsov, the head of the State Duma Expert Council on Defense] Patriotic indoctrination is in first place. One can create the most state-of-the-art equipment but all of these technical developments are worthless if there will not be people, who are devoted to the matter of the country's defense. Therefore, cadet education, military education, and military-patriotic indoctrination are emerging as a priority in state policy...

[Andrey Ivanov] How can you respond to those people who call for not spending resources on defense but to allocate them for social needs?

[Vladimir Shvarev, the deputy director of the Center for the Analysis of World Trade] If we don't want to feed our army, you will have to feed someone else's army. Right now we are surrounded by NATO bases practically from all sides. The Alliance has approached our borders in the Baltic Region to within a gun shot. It is not worth talking about the current situation in Ukraine. Yes, we have economic problems. One can cut other expenditures, including social expenditures, although the people's standard of living must be acceptable. But it is simply impossible to cut expenditures for the Army.

We must understand that the United States took a course toward the elimination of Russia as an independent country. We need to proceed from this...

Soldiers at the 70th anniversary Victory Day Parade. "2015 Moscow Victory Day Parade - 01" by Kremlin.ru. Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2015_Moscow_Victory_Day_Parade_-_01.jpg#/media/File:2015_Moscow_Victory_Day_Parade_-_01.jpg



OE Watch Commentary: *Armenian-Russian relations continue to show signs of deterioration. The accompanying excerpts from a 28 April 2015 Lenta.ru (Ribbon) article, written by Gevorg Mizryan of the Russian Academy of Science's US and Canadian Studies Institute, address this.*

Lenta.ru for years has remained among Russia's most popular news sources. In March 2014 it went through major editorial changes when the outlet's editor-in-chief and almost half the staff lost their jobs. In an issued statement, Lenta's former employees said the move was an effort to reorganize the outlet to present a more pro-Kremlin perspective. Prominent Western media analysts also viewed these events as part of the Kremlin's wider censorship efforts.

Mizryan describes reasons behind the worsening of Russian-Armenian relations. He first touches on the Armenian perspective: Armenian journalists and policy analysts feel Moscow does not pay enough attention to Armenia's interests, nor cares to maintain a Russian cultural presence in Armenia. Consequently, Armenia's youth turn increasingly towards the West. Mizryan acknowledges that Russia should not ignore this reality. Importantly, he writes that while Armenia, in this context, is nowhere near the situation of Ukraine in 2004, when Ukrainian citizens staged the peaceful protests of the Orange Revolution, "Ukraine's example has demonstrated what can happen without a serious attitude towards issues of cultural influence and interaction."

Mizryan observes that, in this context, some "seek to exploit Armenians' nostalgia for their former lands in Turkey... and recall that it was thanks to the supply of weapons and money from Soviet Russia that Kemalist Turkey managed to win the war with Armenia in 1920 and deprive it of its lands..." Russia, he points out, should take into account that history matters more to many Armenians than the country's current realities. Yet, ultimately, the recent rapprochement between Russia and Azerbaijan, which includes Russia's sale of weapons to Azerbaijan, is ultimately the reason behind Armenia's fears and concerns.

Mizryan puts the bulk of the blame for worsening Russian-Armenian relations on

Source: Gevorg Mirzyan, "Отнюдь не в пользу Еревана. Почему охлаждаются отношения России и Армении" (Not at all in Favor of Yerevan. Why Relations between Russia and Armenia are Cooling), Lenta.ru (Ribbon), 28 April 2015. <http://lenta.ru/articles/2015/04/28/armenia/>

Armenia is one of Russia's closest allies in the post-Soviet space, and the only ally in the Caucasus However, the events of recent months (the situation surrounding the murder of an Armenian family in Gyumri by a Russian military officer Valery Permiakov, the accusations that Russia is betraying Armenia's interests, a number of other claims and grievances) show that relations between the two countries are not so smooth...

... Armenian journalists and political analysts complain that the Russian embassy, and the local Rossotrudnichestvo [Russian Cultural Center] office not pay enough attention to the relevant work of the Armenian civil society, or to maintaining a Russian cultural presence in Armenia. [They] see similar disregard in the Russian media

This lack of attention to Armenia's problems has led to the fact that to young people in the region Russia seems less attractive than Europe and the US... Of course, Armenia has a long way to go until the "Orange Revolution," but Ukraine's example has demonstrated what can happen without a serious attitude towards issues of cultural influence and interaction. Already, some "experts" seek to exploit Armenians' nostalgia for their former lands in Turkey... and recall that it was thanks to the supply of weapons and money from Soviet Russia that Kemalist Turkey, managed to win the war with Armenia in 1920 and deprive it of its lands... It is important for Russia to take into account the fact that the Armenian society pays more attention to its history than the current realities.

...Nonetheless, most of the blame for the current crisis in bilateral relations lies on Armenia, which has developed a very wrong perception of the nature of Russian-Armenian relations and the priorities of Russian foreign policy in general. Yerevan is seriously exaggerating their own importance, trying to project onto Russia all the negative features of a black-and-white world view. In particular, to force Moscow to choose between relations with Yerevan and Baku.

...However, today the Armenian soldier and Armenian people have to remember that despite [Moscow's the supply of arms [to Baku] (which, incidentally, allows Moscow to partially control the development of the Azerbaijani army and to influence Baku's policy), it is Russia who is the main guarantor of Nagorno-Karabakh's security.

... In practice, the course of Russian-Azerbaijani rapprochement presents the biggest challenge for the Armenian-Russian relations. The problem is not that, as some Armenian activists believe, Moscow will change allies and automatically amend its stance on the Karabakh issue. It is that the Armenia society, which sees through a zero-sum prism, will accept this version, which does not withstand any critique, as objective and even already-occurred reality. In response, the Armenian elites will decide to "punish" Moscow through rapprochement with the West or through intentional cooling of relations that will cause severe irritation from the Kremlin (who is the already tired of Armenia's excessive demands) and may bring on, in this case, a real revision of Russia's priorities in the South Caucasus. Not at all in favor of Yerevan.

(continued)

Continued: Russian-Armenian Relations Continue to Deteriorate

Armenia itself, which “exaggerates” its importance, views relations between the two countries in “black and white” terms, and demands that Moscow choose between Baku and Yerevan. In his view, it is Russia that is in the main guarantor of Nagorno-Karabakh’s security (the subject of a long-standing dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan). Russia’s recent weapons sales to Azerbaijan may concern Yerevan, but it also allows Moscow to maintain leverage over Baku.

Mizryan also feels that Armenia is ultimately to blame for what is to come: as Armenian elites continue to view Russian-Armenian relations in zero-sum terms, they will attempt to “punish” Russia by moving closer to the West. This will, in turn, irritate the Kremlin, which is already unhappy with what Mizryan feels are unreasonable demands, and will indeed push Moscow to revise its Armenia policy, “[n]ot at all in favor of Yerevan,” concludes Mizryan.

While Mizryan’s view leans towards a Kremlin perspective, relations between the two countries indeed appear to have worsened in recent months. Armenia’s population overall is severely declining; moreover, young people, who tend to favor the West, do not comprise an overwhelming proportion of the population. For many Armenians, particularly of the older generation and especially those who are part of the diaspora, history indeed often matters more than the current reality.

The topic of deteriorating Russian-Armenian relations continues to gain greater traction in Russian-language media and is increasingly important to watch in the context of the complex dynamics of the South Caucasus. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

Brothers Disunited: Russia’s Use of Military Power in Ukraine

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http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/international/McDermott/Brotherhood_McDermott_2015.pdf

First Russian-Chinese Joint Naval Exercises in the Mediterranean

30 April 2015

OE Watch Commentary: On 30 April 2015 the Russian press reported on Russian-Chinese joint naval exercises in the Mediterranean scheduled for mid-May—the first ever in this region. The first excerpt is from opposition-leaning Gazeta.ru (Newspaper), and the second is from news web-site Russian Dialog.

Gazeta.ru contrasts a Western perspective quoted in Reuters to the official Russian and Chinese positions. According to a Reuters expert referenced in the article, these exercises are going to be conducted in response to increased US military cooperation with its allies in Asia. The article's authors also add their own perspective, pointing to the 28 April 2015 visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the US, upon the conclusion of which American and Japanese defense ministers signed an agreement that, among other things, pledges to expand military cooperation between the two countries and envisions a more active role for Japan.

From the Japanese perspective, China has been taking an increasingly aggressive role in the region, particularly when it comes to regional disputes in the East and South China Seas. The Japanese government has publically expressed strong concern about Chinese behavior for several years now, and has been looking to strengthen its relationship with its allies to balance China's influence there.

According to Gazeta.ru, the official response from China and Russia is that the upcoming May exercises are unrelated to the situation in the region, but rather are about the strategic partnership between the two countries. The excerpt from Russian Dialog reports on the official Chinese position about the exercises, which, according to a Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman, are not directed against a third party. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

Source: Lubov Glazunova, Aleksandr Braterskiy, "Игра мускулами на Средиземном море Россия и Китай проведут совместные учения в Средиземном море" (Flexing muscles in the Mediterranean. Russia and China to hold joint military exercises in the Mediterranean), Gazeta.ru (Newspaper), 30 April 2015. http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2015/04/30_a_6662617.shtml

Russia and China will hold joint military exercises in May for the first time in the Mediterranean Sea. As noted, these exercises are a response to US actions [of] actively developing military cooperation with its allies in Asia. China and Russia will support strategic co-operation, regardless of the current situation, according to a [Reuters] expert...

China's Defense Ministry announced that the military maneuvers have nothing to do with the situation in the region and are not directed against anyone, and their goal is "to deepen friendship and practical partnership between the two countries, and enhance the ability of our navies to jointly respond to security threats," writes Reuters.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, announcing last year the upcoming exercises, said that the main purpose of bringing together the two countries is "formation of the collective in its nature regional security system."

The exercises show that Russia and China "will maintain a strategic partnership, regardless of the current situation," commented expert of the Russian Council on International Affairs Prokhor Tebin.

The expert notes that for the US, the Mediterranean sea is not as crucial as the Pacific Ocean, and the constant presence of the US Navy is absent there. However, he said, the United States often voices the need to establish a permanent group of ships in this area. He also said that Americans will take an active interest in the exercises, "What the Chinese and the Russians are doing in the Mediterranean Sea, is interesting to them"

The visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the US on 28 April and the signing by the defense ministers of the two countries' of an agreement to expand military cooperation could have influenced the decision to hold the maneuvers in May.

According to the document, Japan, which so far has only been allowed to defend its own territory, is now able to provide military support to the Americans, if they are attacked by other countries. The United States will also supply Japan with advanced weaponry and a missile defense system...

Source: "Россия и Китай проведут совместные военно-морские учения" (Russia and China will Carry out Joint Naval Exercises), Russian Dialog, 30 April 2015 http://www.rusdialog.ru/news/24949_1430415619

.. "To participate in the exercises both sides will send a total of nine surface ships, among them, from the Chinese side, this will include ships 'Linyi,' 'Weifan,' and 'Veysanhu,' currently operating at the moment as part of the 19th Gulf of Aden convoy and waters off the Somali coast," said [official China's Defense Ministry spokesman] Geng Yansheng.

... During the exercises, "defensive actions at sea, stocking of supplies at sea, escort of vessels, joint action to ensure maritime safety and practical use of arms" will be practiced.

"It is necessary to clarify that these joint exercises are not directed against a third party, and are not connected with the situation in the region", concluded Geng Yansheng...

OE Watch Commentary: *In April 2015 Russian President Vladimir Putin and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras pledged to improve bilateral relations. As Greece's economy continues to face serious difficulties, Putin offered the prospect of Russian investment in Greece. Tsipras publically welcomed the offer, despite Europe's standoff with Russia over the crisis in Ukraine. Earlier, Athens had also publically criticized Europe's sanctions against Russia over Ukraine.*

Among possible areas of cooperation, Putin and Tsipras had discussed in April an energy project: Turkish Stream, a gas pipeline from Russia to Turkey into the EU via Greece, allowing Russia to bypass Ukraine. Greece, in turn, could earn income from this, and other projects with Russia, which would allow Greece to repay its substantial debts.

The accompanying excerpts are examples of reporting in the Russian-language press about the discussions. The first is from business-oriented Vzglyad (View), published on 21 April 2015, which details a recent meeting between Greece's Economy Minister, Panagiotis Lafazanis, and Russia's Gazprom head, Alexei Miller. According to the article, Turkish Stream will be signed in the near future, though it provides no further details on specifically when or how this will happen. Russia guarantees delivery of up to 47 billion cubic meters of gas per year through Greece. While the capacity of Ukraine's gas transport system is 142.5 billion cubic meters a year, the actual amount of gas transported to Europe has, according to the article, declined significantly in recent years, from 121 billion cubic meters in 2005 to 55 billion in 2014. If these numbers are correct and remain on the same declinist trend, and if Turkish Stream indeed comes into fruition as Greek and Russian officials describe, Russia could indeed bypass Ukraine entirely in transporting gas to Europe.

The second accompanying excerpt, published on 24 April 2015 in RIA Novosi, which presents a Kremlin perspective, cites Alexander Epishov, a Russian expert and principal analyst at the Moscow International Energy Forum, "Russian Fuel and Energy Complex in the XXI Century." He believes Turkish Stream and other project offers would allow Greece to earn income that would help Greece repay its large debts.

Source: "Греция анонсировала подписание соглашения с Россией по газопроводу в ближайшее время" (Greece Announced Signing Gas Pipeline Agreement with Russia in the Near Future), Vzglyad (View), 21 April 2015. <http://www.vz.ru/news/2015/4/21/741361.html>

The agreement between Russia and Greece on the gas pipeline "Turkish Stream" will be signed in the near future, announced Greece's Economy Minister Panagiotis Lafazanis after talks with Gazprom head Alexei Miller...

According to Miller, Russia guarantees delivery through Greece of up to 47 billion cubic meters of gas per year.

It should be noted that the capacity of Ukraine's gas transport system on the border with EU countries – is 142.5 billion cubic meters a year. The value of this route has declined steadily in recent years. If in 2005, 121 billion cubic meters of gas was transported to Europe, in 2014 this amount fell to 55 billion.

Miller announced that the continuation of the project "Turkish stream" through Greece may be implemented by the Russian-European consortium, which intends to bring in 2 billion euros.

Recall that on April 18 it was reported that Greece may get 5 billion euros as an advance payment for the construction of "Turkish Stream," within the framework of a bilateral agreement which is planned to be signed with Russia...

Source: "Аналитик: 'Россия может предложить Греции газ, а США – только кредит'" (Analyst: "Russia can Offer Greece Gas, and US-Only Credit"), RIA Novosti, 24 April 2015. http://ria.ru/radio_brief/20150424/1060677178.html

...Analyst Alexander Epishov believes that the US has no viable alternative to the "Turkish stream," and Athens will reject its offer.

Greece's Foreign Affairs Minister Nikos Kotzias informed Associated Press during his visit to the US that the US intends to make a counter-offer to Athens in connection with Gazprom's initiative to build the gas pipeline "Turkish Stream" on Greek territory for the supply of Russia's gas to Europe.

"It is completely obvious that Washington will be unable to make an adequate offer, if we talk about Russia and Gazprom. Because Russia's proposal - that's what will allow Greece to earn [income]. First, in regards to credit, which Greece can get - up to 5 billion euros, this is also payment for transit. And what can Washington offer? At best – simply a loan. And if we talk about energy cooperation, the prospects of LNG export from the United States - they are not considered within the next five years. Of course, the US has influence in the IMF and the EU, in this sense they have some trump cards. But of course, such a proposal to Greece as the one Russia is making, the US will not make [to Greece]," said principal analyst at the Moscow International Energy Forum "Russian Fuel and Energy Complex in the XXI Century" Alexander Epishov live on Radio Sputnik.

He noted that Washington is trying to prevent by any means the Russian's construction of a gas pipeline to Europe that bypasses Ukraine...

(continued)

Continued: Russia's Budding Energy Cooperation with Greece

He feels that the West can only offer Greece loans, and, therefore, Russia's offer to Greece is superior to that of the West. End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)

Alexander Epishov believes that Greece will not abandon the construction "Turkish stream" on its territory...

"... At least for the expert community it is obvious that the Russian proposal... is... very beneficial for Greece, enabling it to receive additional loans under the guarantee of transit fees. And what would the European Union and the United States offer is still not clear," concluded the expert.

The Changing Face of Underwater Combat

15 April 2015

OE Watch Commentary: *The Russian Federation has developed and intends to mass produce two unique types of small arms specifically for direct and indirect underwater combat.*

The first article describes the capabilities and intent for mass distribution of the DP-64 to Russia's Navy. It is a double-barreled shoulder-mounted grenade launcher for use against sabotage operations divers. The second article describes a newly developed rifle for surface and subsurface direct combat. Both of these antipersonnel specific weapons are intended for mass production and distribution to the Russian Navy by 2016. End OE Watch Commentary (Croft)

Source: Editor, "DP-64 Grenade Launcher 'Nepryadva' For Firing at Underwater Targets," Ridus Online, 25 February 2015, <http://www.ridus.ru/news/179391>, accessed 20 April 2014.

DP-64 grenade launcher "Nepryadva" for underwater targets launched in series

Russian weapons developer "Basalt" launches into production a unique double-barreled anti-sabotage grenade launcher DP-64 "Nepryadva"...

..."The DP-64 is now commercially available. In 2014, we have received a substantial order from the Ministry of Defense, the exact amount and to what units it will be delivered, I cannot say, but we are talking about the Navy, "- The head of Basalt's scientific and engineering department Pavel Sidorov said to RIA Novosti

The "Nepryadva" grenade launcher is designed to protect ships from attack by frogmen from outer raids, open anchorage and team sites, as well as for the protection of hydraulic structures, offshore platforms and other important marine and coastal sites. According to open sources, the maximum sighting range is 400 meters....

Source: "Tula Gunsmiths Have Created a Unique Automatic Active Denial System for Shooting Underwater," PolitRussia.com, 15 April 2015, <http://politrussia.com/news/tulskie-oruzheyniki-sozdali-902/>, accessed 20 April 2015.

Tula gunsmiths have created a unique automatic ADS for shooting underwater

Tula gunsmiths have created a unique machine that can fire both on land and underwater. This year's scheduled distribution of 20 units. By the results of experimental military operation in the production version will make changes that will make the machine more comfortable. Serial production of the Active Denial System (ADS) is scheduled for 2016. The new machine was shown to Vladimir Putin during his visit to Tula. The representative of the Tula branch "Instrument Design Bureau - Central Design and Research Bureau" Yuri Amelin spoke about the specifics of "amphibious weapons."

Amelin stated: "One of our company's new developments – is the ADS. This is, without exaggeration, a unique system that has neither Russian nor foreign counterparts. For the first time in the world to combine effective fire both on land and under water ... Naturally, this is a special and expensive weapon designed for special forces personnel. "

In 2016, Russia will begin mass production of two unique shooting complexes to fight underwater saboteurs – the ADS and underwater DP-64 grenade launcher "Nepryadva."

More Mistral Mystery

10 May 2015

“Today these Mistrals are like suitcases without handles for the French: and they are difficult to carry and a waste to throw away.”

OE Watch Commentary: *In 2010-11 Russian officials negotiated a contract with their French counterparts to purchase two Mistral helicopter assault ships. When the deal was initially announced, many within Russia’s military industry spoke out against the plan, claiming that the contract was detrimental to the country’s own shipbuilding industry. The deal went forward despite these protests. Besides improving Russia’s power-projection capability and developing closer trade relations with the French, part of the reason that Russian defense officials agreed to this foreign purchase was to impress upon their domestic defense manufacturers the need to become more responsive and competitive.*

The first of the ships (Vladivostok) was completed last year, and Russian naval personnel travelled to France to begin training on the new ship. However, as a result of Russia’s continued aggression against Ukraine, the French leadership decided to cancel the deal. Since then, there has been considerable speculation as to the economic fallout from this cancelled contract and the ultimate disposition of this ship. The first excerpt below describes three options French officials might adopt to dispose of this ship: keep it for the French Navy; sell it to a third country; or simply scuttle it.

Since the ship was designed to Russian military standards, the first two options would likely entail considerable modification and additional expense. Similarly, simply sinking the ship would entail a significant loss for the French shipbuilding industry. The Russian expert quoted in the article suggests that France will either retain and modify the ship for its own fleet or modify and sell it to a third country.

One other possible option bears scrutiny, particularly in light of the increasingly close relations between Moscow and Beijing. As the second excerpt points out, affairs between the two countries “are experiencing the best period in the whole long history.” According to the article, both countries have a gripe against the US, which has resulted in a “Beijing-Moscow strategic line... coming into being.”

Source: Olga Bozhyeva, “Эксперт: Россия готова демонтировать с «Мистралей» все военное оборудование” [Expert: Russia Is Prepared to Dismantle All of the Military Equipment from the ‘Mistrals’], MK Online, 6 May 2015.

The two Mistral Class helicopter carriers, which have been built for Russia, could be sunk on the high seas by France in the event of the abrogation of the contract and the refusal to deliver them to Russia....

...In the process, the newspaper does not cite the decision on the Mistrals as final: This is only one of the variants, which is being examined at this time on an equal basis with the possibility of their use by their own Navy, or through their sale to another country. Based upon the newspaper’s information, Canada, Egypt, and “a northern European country” figure among the potential clients.

In so doing, the newspaper considers attempts to use the Vladivostok and Sevastopol helicopter carriers by the French Navy to be “improbable” because “they were modified to Russian standards and they will have to reconstruct and reequip them in that case, which will cost many hundreds of millions of euros.”...

...Ruslan Pukhov, the director to the Center for the Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, expressed his prediction on the further development of this situation to MK:

“Today these Mistrals are like suitcases without handles for the French: and they are difficult to carry and a waste to throw away. With respect to sinking the ships, this is not a question for today. That variant is possible only under the condition that both sides resolve all claims against each other. Despite the fact that the negotiations on compensation have been going on for a long time, I think that several more months will be required for a final agreement....

...“But Paris is most likely attempting to avoid this development of events. I think that other variants will become the priority. So, for example, France initially planned to have several universal landing ships of the Mistral Class for itself. Right now the French have three of them and they want four. So, fundamentally, they could keep one of the ships for themselves, while conducting the needed reequipping on it. Of course, this will require quite a bit of money but this is still better than to sink an already finished ship.

“Furthermore, they will certainly attempt to offer at least one of the Mistral to whomever is interested in it and who has the experience of operation French maintained ships, for example, Brazil....

(continued)

Continued: More Mistral Mystery

In this regard, it might be worth recalling the origins of China's first aircraft carrier. The unfinished Soviet carrier (Admiral Kuznetsov) was originally sold to a Chinese firm under the auspices of transforming the ship into a floating hotel and casino. The ship instead was transferred to the Chinese Navy, where it was restored and upgraded to become the country's first aircraft carrier.

Since one of the options for the French with regard to the cancellation of the Mistral contract is to sell the ship to a third country, if that country were China, then the latter could re-sell the ship to the Russians. Such an option might prove beneficial to all parties involved.

End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

Source: "Relations with China as Best Ever," Rossiya 1 Television, 10 May 15

Relations between Russia and China have never been so good, official Russian television channel Rossiya 1 said, commenting on Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow to take part in the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in World War II....

...Contracts "worth trillions" were signed during the visit. Moscow and Beijing agreed to create a "single economic space in Eurasia" by integrating China's Silk Route project with the Kremlin-led Eurasian Economic Union. "Experts warn Obama that soon Washington will be squeezed out of Eurasia," the report said. The correspondent described it as a "titanic shift in global geopolitics".

"A Beijing-Moscow strategic line is coming into being before our very eyes. Moreover, the motives of Russia and China are similar. The USA creates problems for Russia in the west, so we go east. The USA restricts China's advancement in Southeast Asia and sets China against Japan, so China goes west, and here we meet," the report said....

...Next week, in a further display of the growing military cooperation between the two countries, Chinese and Russian warships will meet up to conduct live-fire drills in the eastern Mediterranean....



Mistral Helicopter Assault Ship.

Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mistral-photo26.jpg>

Perils of Positive Military Reporting

12 May 2015

OE Watch Commentary: Since Putin's return to the presidency in May 2012, the Kremlin has increasingly used the Russian media as a force-multiplier for stoking patriotism. Russia's resurgent military strength was on full display during the impressive 70th Anniversary Victory Day celebrations on 9 May. The military parade on Red Square, replete with ranks of marching soldiers and columns of modern weapon systems, was covered extensively by all of the country's national media. The images and videos from the parade were repackaged and repeatedly shown on subsequent broadcasts.

Besides the Ministry of Defense's (MoD) own significant media holdings (e.g., Zvezda-TV, Krasnaya Zvezda-newspaper) all of the traditional major Russian media (TV, radio and newspaper) have specific programming dedicated to military topics. The first excerpt below describes an award ceremony (Media-Ace 2015) hosted by the MoD in late March to recognize those "journalists, military experts, other members of the press, online journalists and bloggers who have made a significant contribution to strengthening the Russian armed forces' positive image." Awards were presented to all forms of reporting, e.g., TV, radio, magazine, documentary, blogs, newspapers, etc. (For a brief report on this ceremony, see: http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201503271922-3tnu.htm.) Today, the Russian media consumer has the opportunity to immerse himself in positive military programming from every possible venue.

This optimistic media portrayal of Russia's military contrasts starkly with the image of the 1990s and early 2000s. The trauma of the Soviet military's collapse and the wars in Chechnya did not lend itself to a positive portrayal. During that period hardly a week went by without some negative report describing incompetence, corruption, abuse or wanton violence. The relatively free Russian media of that time covered many of these damaging stories in awful detail. This adverse media experience serves as a backdrop to Defense Minister Shoigu's injunction to Russian journalists at this award ceremony not to use the media "weapon... in a negative way." As Shoigu points out, "the Defense Ministry has tried to work in such a way that there should be a reason to report a lot of interesting things about the armed forces and has done a lot to improve the image of military service."

While there is much to be said for a positive portrayal of military affairs in the media, there is a danger in creating a too optimistic depiction. The second excerpt touches upon a report which was released by a Kremlin-opposition group, which describes Russian economic and military personnel losses from the ongoing conflict in SE Ukraine. It claims that "no less than 220 servicemen from Russia have died in the armed conflict in the Donbass, and the country has suffered a loss in the amount of R53 billion." Given this negative portrayal, it is not surprising that this report received little publicity in Russia's national media and that a majority of Russians know nothing about this report. An exclusively positive depiction of Russian's military could still have negative consequences. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Media Ace promotional logo. Source: www.mod.ru

Source: "Information becomes another armed forces component," Interfax, 28 Mar 2015.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has described the media as a type of weapon, which cannot be used "in a negative way."

"The day has come when we all have to admit that a word, a camera, a photo, the Internet, and information in general have become yet another type of weapons, yet another component of the armed forces. This weapon can be used in a good and in a bad way. This is a weapon that was involved in various events in our country in different years, both in our defeats and in our victories," Shoigu said at an award ceremony of the MEDIA-ACE journalistic contest instituted by the Defense Ministry.

Over the past year, the Defense Ministry has tried to work in such a way that there should be a reason to report a lot of interesting things about the armed forces and has done a lot to improve the image of military service, Shoigu said.

"I would like to remind you that it is time now when the media incorporate a lot. And, on the one hand, this is truly a weapon. On the other hand, this is something that can cause serious injuries. Nowadays, this is something that can act simultaneously as an investigator, a prosecutor, a judge, and an executor in bad hands. I wouldn't like to see ourselves gradually turning into those who use this weapon in the most negative way," Shoigu concluded.

The all-Russian press festival MEDIA-ACE-2015 is the Russian Defense Ministry's new project arranged to encourage media outlets, journalists, military experts, other members of the press, online journalists and bloggers who have made a significant contribution to strengthening the Russian armed forces' positive image....

Continued: Perils of Positive Military Reporting

Source: Sergey Goryashko. “Соратники Бориса Немцова насчитали 220 российских солдат, погибших в Донбассе” [Boris Nemtsov’s Comrades-in-Arms have Counted 220 Russian Soldiers, Who Died in the Donbass], Kommersant Online, 12 May 2015.

... In the authors’ opinion, the report, which was printed in 2,000 copies, cites evidence of the presence of Russian military personnel in Ukraine – for example, that no less than 220 servicemen from Russia have died in the armed conflict in the Donbass, and the country has suffered a loss in the amount of R53 billion....

...While citing Boris Nemtsov’s sources, the report asserts that Russian soldiers massively died in Ukraine in two periods. No fewer than 150 caskets with military personnel returned to the RF during the summer of 2014, after the Ukrainian Army’s offensive, but their relatives received compensation of R3 million each and signed nondisclosure agreements. The second wave of caskets with the bodies of Russian soldiers went to Russia in January-February of this year: at that time, there were no less than 70 deceased, but the soldiers’ relatives did not receive any compensation whatsoever since the military personnel were officially released from service prior to being shipped to the Donbass....

...According to the information of the Levada Center, which conducted a poll in March: 64 percent of Russians know nothing about Boris Nemtsov’s reports, 21 percent have heard about them, six percent are familiar with the theses, and only five percent have read them....



Biographical Sketch: Dmitry Rogozin and Russian Nationalism

By Ray Finch, FMSO

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

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

OE Watch Commentary: *A curious event occurred just prior to the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Soviet Victory in the Great Patriotic War. One of the key defendants in the high-level corruption case which had led to the dismissal of the former minister of defense in November 2012 was finally sentenced to prison. The trial and the timing of the sentencing reveal much about social-political-military relations in Russia today.*

The background to this incident stretches back almost seven years. One of the key reforms in 2008 implemented by former Defense Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov dealt with privatizing much of the excess property held by the Ministry of Defense (MoD). Much of this property had been on the MoD's books since the collapse of the USSR. As the Soviet/Russian military was downsized and reformed, this excess property would be sold, and, theoretically, the proceeds from these sales could go back into the government's coffers. Not surprisingly, in carrying out this reform various financial irregularities were committed.

*Yevgenia Vasilyeva, Serdyukov's close associate (and alleged paramour), headed the MoD's property department. In late 2012, in a widely publicized case, Serdyukov was relieved as minister of defense and Vasilyeva was charged with embezzlement. The lengthy trial and court proceedings were transformed into a surreal soap opera or cause-celebre and the glamorous Vasilyeva became a poster-child for all that had been wrong under the former defense minister. The trial also became something of a litmus test for the Kremlin's claim that it was serious about tackling high-level corruption. (For additional background on this trial, see "Dangerous Corruption Fight," in the **August 2014 OEW**).*

As the trial reached its conclusion, there were serious doubts (given the often arbitrary nature of the Russian legal system) that Vasilyeva would actually be punished with a jail sentence. She had spent the previous two years under liberal house arrest, where she was permitted to engage in all sorts of creative pursuits (e.g., making music videos, staging art shows, holding poetry readings, etc.). Many Russians, particularly those in the military, regarded this "house punishment" with indignation. This sense of resentment only became worse when shortly before the trial ended in May, prosecutors suggested that they were considering merely fining Vasilyeva and giving her an 8-year suspended sentence.

*Such a light sentence would have definitely cast a pall over the country's Victory Day commemoration, and, as the brief excerpt points out, on the day before the 9 May celebration Vasilyeva was instead actually sentenced to five years in a medium-security penal colony. However, as the article points out, she will only serve 2.5 years in a penal colony because she has been under house arrest since November 2012 and her house arrest counts towards her jail time. And even this term might be reduced, if, like her former boss (Serdyukov), she receives a presidential pardon. Such an ultimate verdict could have a profound effect upon military morale. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)***

Source: "Yevgenia Vasilyeva Gets Five Years in Jail," Interfax, 8 May 2015.

Yevgenia Vasilyeva gets Five Years in Jail

The Presnensky District Court in Moscow has sentenced former official of the Russian Defense Ministry Yevgenia Vasilyeva to five years in a medium-security penal colony as part of the Oboronservice case, an Interfax correspondent reported from the court room.

Vasilyeva, who was the key defendant in the Oboronservice case, was taken into custody in the court room. She was escorted from the courtroom to a convoy room and was handcuffed, an Interfax correspondent has reported. ...

...Vasilyeva will serve 2.5 years in a penal colony because she has been under house arrest since November 2012 and her house arrest counts towards her jail time.

...However, Vasilyeva can hope to be released on parole in the near future since has spent 2.5 years under house arrest and that means she has served half of her sentence already. According the current legislation, a convict who has served half of his sentence can apply for parole after the sentence takes legal effect.

...Yevgenia Vasilyeva, former head of the Defense Ministry's property relations department, was a key suspect in the criminal case involving the sale of real estate and the embezzlement of funds belonging to the Oboronservice company, which is controlled by the Defense Ministry.

According to the sentence, Vasilyeva was found guilty on six counts of fraud, the legalization of the proceeds of crime and the abuse of office. Initially the damage caused by Vasilyeva was estimated at three billion rubles. Later the damage she is expected to recover was cut to something more than 216 million. ...

Source: Konstantin Lobkov, Krasnaya Zvezda Online, <http://www.redstar.ru>, 15 May 2015.

OE Watch Commentary: *The Primorskiy Kray is that part of the Russian Far East where Russia borders on North Korea, China and the Pacific Ocean facing Japan. It is rugged, forested terrain with too-few all-weather roads. At one time, the Kray was a hotbed of military interest, but that waned after the collapse of the Soviet Union.*

Now interest in the area has picked up. The 83rd Guards Separate Air Assault Brigade had quite an exercise-air assault landings, a parachute landing, live fire exercises and an amphibious landing. Some of these events were 250 kilometers apart and tested the ability of the brigade to control separate activities in a rugged area. The exercise was supported by the 5th Army of the Far East Military District, the Pacific Fleet, the air transport command, the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Far Eastern close-air support units, the Moscow-based Airborne 38th Signal Regiment, some Spetsnaz subunits from an unspecified Spetsnaz brigade (serving as OPFOR), and senior military Army and Airborne staffs. It is an impressive accomplishment over an overextended logistics support route.

Many armies train infantry units to specialize in particular skills in addition to their primary. Evidently this is true in the 83rd Separate Air Assault Brigade, where one battalion is parachute qualified and another is qualified to conduct amphibious landings. This training is expensive in terms of logistics, training facilities and training time. Russia is making this investment.

End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)

Guards Impreture

The airborne troopers had been in attack positions for several days. Soldiers of the 3rd Air Assault Battalion were going to parachute onto a landing zone from an altitude of one and one-half kilometers [4900 feet]. Snow no longer covered the landing zone, but the nighttime frost kept the ground hard and increased the possibility of injury. A weather reconnaissance Il-76 flew overhead. The crew measured wind velocity and updated the coordinates of the assault force drop zone.

“Today’s conditions for the airborne landing are most suitable,” Drop Supervisor Air Squadron Navigator Major Valeriy Krashchenko noted. “The wind aloft is eight meters-per-second and at the ground it is only four. This allows the parachutists to land safely. So everything will be in order. And our pilots are first rate.”

“A tactical exercise of 83rd Separate Air Assault Brigade took place on Primorskiy Kray ranges under the direction of Airborne Troops Deputy Commander Major-General Andrey Kholzakov. Airborne troopers tried to give a good account of themselves in the exercise not just because of the presence of a team of officers from VDV [Airborne Troops] Headquarters; the title of guardsmen inspired and obligated them. On the eve of the exercise, Russian Federation Presidential Edict No 158, dated 25 March 2015, arrived in Ussuriysk conferring the “Guards” honorific upon the brigade.”

An An-12 and six Il-76’s with more than 300 servicemen on board took off one after the other. “Get ready! Go!” Every paratrooper counted ‘501, 502, 503’ as he exited the aircraft and then pulled his ripcord. First aircraft, second aircraft, third, fourth, fifth, sixth... One after the other they flew over the drop zone leaving an even chain of white-canopied dandelions in the sky.

“Spread out, look around you!” the voice of Guards Major Shelutkin barked into a megaphone pointed upward at the airborne troopers. “Don’t hang in the air, control your descent with the suspension line! Face the drop zone, prepare for landing, feet together!”

As they landed, the paratroopers gathered up their parachutes and linked up with their comrades in their subunits. Then they moved on foot to the Sergeyevskiy combined-arms training area, where they occupied defensive positions against a simulated enemy. The 83rd

Air Assault Brigade Commander, Guards Colonel Aleksandr Dembitskiy, arrived at Sergeyevskiy to coordinate details with Motorized Rifle Company Commander Captain Konstantin Korshunov and other officers of the 59th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade on upcoming training events [the 59th is stationed at Sergeyevskiy and provided training support to this exercise].

(continued)

Continued: Airborne and Amphibious Exercise in the Russian Far East

At this time, Guards Colonel Dembitskiy also confirmed that the Pacific Fleet had provided a large landing ship which a battalion of his airborne troopers, who had traveled by rail and road march to a southern Primor'ye port, were now boarding.

The next stage of the exercise involved an air assault using M-8 helicopters to seize an overwatch position for the amphibious landing on Cape Klerk. "All this, naturally, is good experience in command and control and coordination of the brigade commander with different branches troops and forces," General Khalilov says. "A tank company, multiple rocket launchers, and other artillery also are drawing up to the range. There also will be ground attack aircraft during execution of fire exercises. And the commander has to take everything into account so the brigade as a whole executes assigned missions in different areas."

On the final day of the exercise in a near-combat situation, a reinforced air assault battalion managed to encircle the simulated enemy and brought down the firepower of all available weapons on him: BMP guns, D-30 howitzers, multiple rocket launchers, T-72 tanks, rocket launchers, machineguns, and other small arms.

"A brigade-level exercise has not been held here since the 1990's," said the VDV deputy commander, commenting on the event. "But now we already are in a different stage of combat training. Special attention is being given to interbranch training, so we are striving to familiarize the brigade with operations which it will face subsequently in different possible theaters. What is a new experience for the airborne troopers today must be rehearsed while revising certain items in tactical standards in the dynamics of the training process."

RESTRUCTURING THE TACTICAL RUSSIAN ARMY FOR UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

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

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



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

Floating Collection Platforms in Arctic

11 May 2015

“A subsidy amounting to 205,209,000 rubles has been made available from the federal budget to re-launch national expedition research in the Arctic region in order to stabilize and promote Russia’s activities in the World Ocean in various areas, with due account taken of the need to expand the use of natural resources and to protect the environment in the Arctic.”

Source: Interfax in English, <http://www.interfax.com/>, 11 May 2015

OE Watch Commentary: *In addition to the significant Russian military spending and expansion of military stationing in the Arctic, Russia has restarted its Arctic drift station program with a \$5,500,000 subsidy. Much of the funding will go to restarting the Russian “North Pole” drift station program, which was suspended in 2013.*

A drift station is a research camp established on an ice floe or ice berg, where scientists conduct measurements and gather data on Arctic oceanology, ice studies, meteorology, geophysics, hydrochemistry and marine biology. The first Soviet drift station was the icebreaker Georgiy Sedov, which was trapped in the Arctic ice for 812 days during 1937-1940. The trapped vessel had scientists on board who performed their duties as an inadvertent drift station during their enforced captivity. Shortly thereafter the Soviets outfitted an expedition and launched the North Pole 1 drift station. The duration of service for the forty North Pole drift stations that followed lasted from weeks to years.

*From the work of the drift stations, Russia has the edge on scientific data for the region. North Pole 2015 (a deviation in naming conventions) will continue that tradition. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)***

Russian Government allocated over 205 million rubles to re-launch Arctic Research

The federal government has allocated over 250 million rubles in budget resources to restart national expedition research in the Arctic region, the Cabinet said on its website.

The relevant initiative was proposed by the Natural Resources Ministry in order to implement the basic aspects of the federal policy in the Arctic region through 2020 and beyond “with an emphasis on broader research in the high-latitude sectors of the Arctic region.”

“The North Pole drifting stations constitute a major factor of maintaining Russia’s presence in the high-latitude segment of the Arctic region and consolidating Russia’s priority role in carrying out comprehensive research projects in the Arctic region,” it says.

The Arctic drifting stations program was launched in 1937 and suspended in the summer of 2013 after the crew of the North Pole 40 drifting station was evacuated due to unfavorable ice conditions triggered off by anomalous interference of natural hazards in the Arctic basin.

The Natural Resources Ministry and the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring, (Roshydromet) proposed switching the North Pole station to seasonal from annual mode. In view of this, the drifting station, opened on April 19 2015, is being referred to as North Pole 2015.

The station will remain operational for about three months between the crew’s arrival and departure. It is located in the region of the geographical North Pole near the Russian Geographical Society’s camp and has a 16-member crew.

“The station’s main goals are to continue and expand the studies of the natural environment in the central part of the Arctic basin which is necessary for perfecting methods of hydrometeorological support for Russia’s economic activities in the Arctic region, and for studying physical and hydro-biological processes influencing or deriving

from global and regional climate change,” the explanatory note says.

The station will be run by the Polar Fund nonprofit organization - a polar research fund set up in November 2000 by the Polar Researchers Association interregional public organization and by scientists and experts in Polar studies.

The inter-regional research program will be implemented by organizations subordinated to Roshydromet, by the Russian Academy of Sciences and by the OJSC Sevmorgeo [Northern State Enterprise on Marine Geological Works]. Logistics support will be provided by several aviation companies and by the Russian Geographical Society’s Expedition Center within the limits of the funding provided to Roshydromet from the 2015 federal budget.

OE Watch Commentary: *Naval ships dispatched on disaster response and humanitarian relief missions are often hooked up to a city's surviving electrical grid, providing emergency power to aid workers and critical infrastructure in the crisis area. Russia has expanded this concept to provide sustainable nuclear energy in the Arctic using reactor ships.*

Of the six largest cities north of the Arctic Circle, five of them are Russian. Supplying these occupants with food and fuel is a major (and expensive) logistics concern. Use of a nuclear reactor ship would certainly ease that problem and encourage population migration into the Arctic region. The warming trend in the north creates another justification for keeping the reactor afloat. Melting ice may be of benefit to seasonal navigation, but melting ice also means melting permafrost, and that means that many areas of existing urban settlement could sink into mud. A 1.5° Centigrade rise in average temperature could begin a melt of Siberia's permafrost.

Navigation and the economic activities associated with navigation and natural resources extraction depend upon ports and infrastructure north of the Arctic Circle to ensure their safety and efficiency. Building this infrastructure on melting permafrost will create new engineering challenges. It makes a lot of sense not to build a nuclear power plant on permafrost. Rather, a mobile nuclear power plant would facilitate maintenance and repair plus provide a way move a reactor out of harm's way in the event of a major weather event. Naturally, there are concerns about the impact that a nuclear accident could have on the fragile Arctic ecosystem. Reactor ships could also provide power to the Arctic bases that the Russian military is resurrecting and expanding.
End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)

Source: The Moscow Times Online, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/>, 21 April 2015

Russia to Build World's First Floating Nuclear Power Plant Next Year, Official Says

Floating nuclear power stations are by no means a new idea for Russia, which has been talking about building a fleet of such stations since the early 2000s. In 2007 construction began on the first floating station, called the Akademik Lomonosov, but after numerous delays the vessel has yet to become fully operational. The floating power station, which can generate a maximum of 70 megawatts of power, was supposed to dock in the far eastern region of Kamchatka in 2017. However, the region is behind on building the necessary coastal infrastructure, news agency RIA Novosti reported last year.

Rogozin's timeline is consistent with remarks made late last year by Alexei Kadilov, CEO of the Baltic Shipyard in St. Petersburg, which is building the floating atomic energy station. Kadilov told journalists in October that the Akademik Lomonosov would be completed and ready by September 2016, RIA Novosti reported. Environmentalists have raised concerns about the wisdom of floating atomic energy stations, worrying one catastrophic mistake could devastate the Arctic's fragile ecosystem.

However, Russia is eager to develop its Arctic territories, which are believed to contain immense and nearly untapped stockpiles of natural resources. After letting much of its infrastructure in the Arctic decay following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia began building new military bases in the region late last year.

“After decades of planning and delays, Russia will have the world's first floating nuclear power station ready in 2016, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin stated. Rogozin, who oversees Russia's activities in the Arctic, stated “It is basically an atomic reactor that can be docked to coastal infrastructure, and it will provide energy through a cable to any Arctic city. The first such floating energy station will be ready by October next year.””

You Call that a Main Tank Gun? Now This is a Main Tank Gun

15 May 2015

“We have a projectile for this tank which will burn through a meter of steel and we will put it on Armata” stated Russian Federation Vice Prime Minister Rogozin, who oversees the VPK [military-industrial complex]. Tanks with a 125-mm gun were demonstrated during the 9 May parade. They were the first to be placed at the Defense Ministry’s disposal.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The introduction of the T-14 Armata main battle tank, with its 125mm main gun, was impressive. Now the Russians plan on replacing the world’s largest bore main tank gun with a larger one. The 125mm main tank gun will be replaced by a 152mm gun firing a round being developed by the “Rosatom” nuclear weapons development bureau. This may not be a tactical nuclear round, but it may be more than a depleted uranium round. End OE Watch Commentary (Gru)*

Source: Liza Dubrovskaya: “Armata Will Become More Powerful: Tank’s Projectile Will Burn Through a Meter of Steel: Fighting Vehicle Will Be Equipped With New Gun”, Moscow MK Online, <http://mk.ru/>, 14 May 2015.

Armata is a heavy, tracked, standardized platform developed by Uralvagonzavod [Ural Railcar Building Plant], based on which a tank and an infantry fighting vehicle were created. The tank’s main distinguishing feature is the unmanned turret and armored crew capsule separated from ammunition stowage. That arrangement increases the chances of tankers remaining alive even if the tank round detonates inside the tank.

In a conference on Russian Federation Armed Forces development in Sochi, President Putin demanded that series production of personal gear and equipment and the vehicles shown on Red Square be adjusted as quickly as possible. “The specifications and performance characteristics of these new vehicles appreciably surpass foreign analogues and they have earned rather high assessments of military specialists,” the president noted, meaning the Armata tank above all.

Source: Sergey Ptichkin: “‘Atomic’ Rounds for the Armatas: Super-Powerful Munitions are being Created for the New generation of Armored Vehicles”, Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, <http://rg.ru/>, 15 May 2015.

“Rosatom” [State Atomic Energy Corporation] specialists are now engaged in the development of munitions for the Armata tanks. The new-generation rounds will be distinguished by the special power of the explosion. They will be effective against all types of armored vehicles available in the inventories of NATO countries. They must be guaranteed to destroy any permanent defensive structure. Moreover, the new rounds must be much safer to handle than those included in the ammunition stores of current tanks.

Russian munitions specialists are able to design munitions which are no worse (and are even better) than those in the NATO countries. But then the problem of their industrial manufacturing emerges. And the military could not wait until a full engineering retooling of the defense industry enterprises occurs. So that is when the nuclear bomb makers came to the rescue. The “Rosatom” KB [Design Bureau] and enterprises never went into decline. The creative capabilities of their employees and the technological level of their production have always been of the highest quality. It is altogether realistic to rely on available engineering capabilities, which is what the specialists of “Rosatom” have done in the creation of the rounds for the Armata tank.

Everything concerning the new munitions is even more highly classified than the construction and technical and tactical specifications of the new armored equipment. But one can at least suggest that the power of an ordinary high-explosive round and the armored piercing subcaliber round will not be worse than their western counterparts. And this means that there will be no necessity to “burn through” the armor with a cumulative [plasma] stream which, as is well known, is effectively destroyed by reactive armor. The main thing is to hit the target. And thereafter all of the active and passive defenses, all of the external electro-optical monitoring systems, and most likely the elements of the tank’s drive train will sustain a very powerful explosion.

(continued)

Continued: You Call that a Main Tank Gun? Now This is a Main Tank Gun

Source: Viktor Baranets, interview with tank specialist Viktor Ivanovich Murakhovskiy, Komsomolskaya Pravda Online, <http://www.kp.ru/>, 14 May 2015

According to tank specialist Viktor Murakhovskiy, “even if we are talking about the 125-mm gun already on Armata and the new projectiles for it, then in terms of its characteristics it surpasses what there is in the West by 20-30 percent. And if a 152-mm gun is installed, then we already will be talking about superiority of many times. There is nothing else similar anywhere in the world.” Further, this will require little configuration. “This will require minimal reconfiguration, inasmuch as the Armata platform has been created as a standardized and modular structure. It also provides for replacement of the combat module and gun. They have identical electrical and information interfaces, data exchange protocols, and so on. True, it will be necessary to dismantle one module and put a new module with a 152-mm gun in its place under plant conditions. They further will interface with all the tank’s systems without changes in its configuration or changes in other assemblies and hardware.”

“The president demanded the development of precision-guided munitions ‘not only of long range but also of the tactical kill zone.’” In Putin’s words, “The analysis of the military conflicts of recent decades shows that its (precision-guided munitions) role and the scales of employment will continuously increase. Therefore, systematic work is needed on the linkage of all of the components of precision-guided munitions and precisely: the weapons themselves and reconnaissance-information support, command and control, and platforms.”

Source: Vladimir Mukhin, “Wars and Armies: Battalions Are Requesting Super-Weapons: The Threat of Local Conflicts is Compelling the RF to Accelerate the Adoption of the Ground Troops Integrated Development Program,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta Online*, 15 May 2015.

OE Watch Commentary: *Russia’s military has the financial backing of President Vladimir Putin. At the latest meeting on defense problems it was noted that the Ground Troops must have an increase in its military budget, which at the present time is just 16 percent of the entire State Armaments Program for 2020. This requires the development of precise plans and their coordination with the Ground Troops Interdepartmental Integrated Development Program. Troops are required to cover the main strategic axes, neutralize local armed conflicts, and participate in peacekeeping operations. In Putin’s opinion, this requires that they possess “high combat potential, mobility, cohesion, and, of course, have full-strength state-of-the-art arsenals.”* **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Indeed, sources in the government point out that the Ground Troops Development Program will be prepared by the end of the year and will become a component of the State Armament Program for 2025, which should be approved at the end of 2015. But it has not been excluded that the Separate Ground Troops Interdepartmental Integrated Development Program will be approved much earlier, since the President already demanded “to complete all testing as soon as possible and transition to series production” of new Ground Troops weapons and equipment at the meeting on Wednesday.

The Ground Troops’ key role in the Armed Forces is obvious, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief noted at that time—“this is the troop cover of the main strategic axes, participation in the neutralization of local armed conflicts, and also in peacekeeping operations.”

A Ground Troops grouping already covers the Arctic Strategic Access, RF Ground Troops representatives did not permit the development of a military conflict in the Crimea during the spring of 2014, and RF peacekeeping formations are prepared to accomplish their designated missions in local conflict zones in the Donbass, on the border with Afghanistan, and at other hotspots.

Judging by the displays of the latest weapons at the Victory Parade, and also the open source information on the directions of the troops’ modernization, some of the Ground Troops’ problems have already been resolved. By way of illustration, unmanned reconnaissance aerial vehicles (UAVs) have appeared and state-of-the-art types of precision-guided munitions are being prepared for series production. But for the time being, there are no strike UAVs either at the tactical or operational echelon in the Army.

The Joint Troop Command and Control and Weapons Control System at the Tactical Echelon has not been accepted in a massive composition and requires further modification. In this system, the further improvement and introduction into the troops of the Ratnik combat gear for servicemen on the battlefield, in which a total of one VDV battalion marched along Red Square on 9 May, requires resolution.

Even the T-14 tank based upon the Armata platform, which is being prepared for acceptance into the inventory, as it turns out, will have a new, not 125 caliber, but 152 millimeter gun.

OE Watch Commentary: Russian President Vladimir Putin has recently met with Cuban President Raul Castro. While news reports from their 8 May meeting stated that there were no discussion of reopening Russian military bases in Cuba, other bilateral relations were discussed.

One appears to have been the reactivation of the Lourdes SIGINT collection center. Russian Security Committee Deputy Chairman Dmitriy Gorovtsov stated that this is a result of US pressure and sanctions against Russia. Other Russian experts believe it is equally important to watch for US attempts to provoke a new war. To do so, they will be led by the belief that the US alone can choose who the aggressors are in the world and who the victims are in given situations.

In an interview with well known Russian experts Aleksandr Perendzhiye, from the Association of Independent Military Political Experts, and retired Colonel General Leonid Ivashov, a member of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems, these two stressed that everything indicates the US is preparing for a provocation. To prevent this from happening a deterrent must be established off the coast of the US. To do so Russia will begin again to develop a non-block system of equal security for all states, in this case one that includes Venezuela, Brazil, China, and Nicaragua. Such a collective security system will move a deterrent factor "right up to the borders of the US." **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Source: Andrey Ivanov, interview with Aleksandr Perendzhiyev, from the Association of Independent Military Political Experts, and retired Colonel General Leonid Ivashov, a member of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems, "United States Transitioning to 'Number One' Combat Readiness. Any Provocation Would Give the United States the Opportunity to Attack Russia," Svobodnaya Pressa, 7 May 2015.

Washington will respond to an attack on any state belonging to the North Atlantic Alliance without waiting for a consolidated decision by the bloc. This was stated by US Ambassador to NATO Douglas Lute. In view of the State Department's practice of accusing countries of "aggression" even in the absence of evidence, one can expect any kind of provocation, and this would become the "trigger" for a new war.

Unstable zones would be created in Europe, for instance in Ukraine. The Europeans would inevitably be drawn into the conflict, Russia also would not be able to stand aside. It cannot be ruled out that a provocation will take place in Transnistria in order to drag in the NATO member Romania. The region of the North and South Caucasus remains explosive. Frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space could be the catalyst for a major clash and terrorist groupings could appear there

Western public opinion is being prepared for the possibility of war. And we are seeing large-scale NATO exercises in the Old World and the movement of military equipment in East European countries. Everything indicates that the United States is preparing for a provocation. The aim is to drag European countries into a confrontation with Russia. Then the US military will get involved, providing space and air support.

A provocation could be staged with the participation of a small NATO state. And the NATO supreme commander would immediately announce that an act of aggression had been committed and give the order for a retaliatory strike. This would be a local, not a global conflict. But the United States would do everything to ensure the escalation of the conflict, its growth.

We must create a grand coalition against the unleashing of war. China, India, and Latin America have an interest in this. And in Europe also there is not a single country or powerful political force that is in favor of war. We should organize a major diplomatic and information offensive.

“A collective security system is needed. The basis of any such system is strength. A draft project with the Chinese to build a canal in Nicaragua is currently under discussion. Why not create a joint troop grouping there together with China. We should resolve the question of stationing troops in Venezuela, we should discuss this with Brazil. A task force should be created off the coasts of the United States. The main thing is to have American territory in our sights.”

Croatia Offers Political And Military Support to Afghanistan

11 May 2015

“Croatia will be the voice of Afghanistan in the European Union.”

OE Watch Commentary: NATO’s mission to Afghanistan, *Resolute Support*, began in January 2015 with Croatia heading the Balkan region’s joint-participation. Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Macedonia placed their troops under Croatian leadership.

As mentioned in the article, Croatia has supported NATO’s mission in Afghanistan for twelve years. In addition to humanitarian programs to aid children and provide health care, Croatia has contributed military police, soldiers, ammunition and weapons, as well as training to the Afghan National Army. Now Croatian President Grabar Kitarovic has promised Afghanistan political support within the European Union. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)**

Source: Milekic, Sven. “Croatian President Visits Afghanistan, Vows Support.” *Balkan Insight*. 11 May 2015. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatian-president-in-unannounced-visit-to-afghanistan>

“Grabar Kitarovic began her visit on Sunday to Afghanistan’s capital Kabul, where she met Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani.

‘I am proud that Croatia, over these 12 years, has participated in the first combat mission of NATO, ISAF [International Security Assistance Force], and is now participating in Operation Determined Support,’ she said.

There are currently 94 Croatian soldiers in Afghanistan as a part of Determined Support, which is aimed at training and equipping the Afghan army.

‘Croatia will be the voice of Afghanistan in the European Union,’ Grabar Kitarovic also promised, adding that Zagreb will support Kabul through a project aimed at helping children and the public health system.”

Islamic Violence Aggravates Bosnian Ethnic Tensions

12 May 2015

OE Watch Commentary: Islamic violence is aggravating existing ethnic and political tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnia). Two entities comprise Bosnia; the Republika Srpska, which contains a majority Serb population, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which contains a majority Bosniak population. Intense political disagreement exists over the possibility of Bosnia’s dissolution into two distinct countries.

Police action by Republika Srpska in response to Islamic violence, explained in the accompanying article, highlighted ethnic divides not only between Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs, but with Muslims as well. The Republika Srpska’s police force conducted their own raid on the Muslims without consulting with Bosnia’s state institutions, in violation of a protocol between its two entities. Illustrated by Bosniak and Bosnian Serb political statements in the article, Islamic violence is spurring nationalistic assertions. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)**

Source: Latal, Srecko, Elvira M. Jukic, and Katarina Panic. “Macedonia Violence Touches a Nerve in Unstable Bosnia.” *Balkan Transitional Justice*. 12 May 2015. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-violence-boost-political-tensions-in-bosnia>

“Less than two weeks before violence erupted in Kumanovo, Macedonia, a radical Islamist attacked a police station in the eastern Bosnian town of Zvornik. ...

The authorities in Bosnia’s Serb-dominated entity, Republika Srpska – in which Zvornik is located – then launched mass arrests, which have only exacerbated political and ethnic tensions. Police raided 32 locations across the entity, seized weapons, ammunition and other military equipment, and arrested 30 Bosniaks [Muslims], 19 of whom they since released while 11 were handed over to prosecutors.

Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik said in Banja Luka on Monday that the violence in Macedonia was ‘a consequence of the unfinished process of the break-up of former Yugoslavia.’ More ominously, in reference to Bosnia, he accused Bosniak political leaders of ‘protecting those who are close to the organized crime and terrorism.’

Bosniak political representatives have meanwhile accused the Bosnian Serb government of using ‘anti-terrorist’ activities as a cover to launch another intimidation campaign against its own non-Serb population.”

“The authorities in Bosnia’s Serb-dominated entity, Republika Srpska ... launched mass arrests, which have only exacerbated political and ethnic tensions.”

Tajikistan to Forgive Jihadists?

12 May 2015

“Citizens of Tajikistan who by deceit were involved in armed conflicts in the Middle East, are sorry for all participation in the wars in Syria, Iraq and other countries, are voluntarily returning home and will be exempted of criminal responsibility.”

OE Watch Commentary: *Tajikistan continues to grapple with the threat posed by the Islamic State (IS) not simply through regional security cooperation, but also by pursuing a policy of amnesty contingent on repentance. Since the start of the IS’s armed conflict in Iraq and Syria, hundreds of Tajiks have been either suspected or confirmed of serving in armed IS detachments. The most recent account tallies the number at exactly 384. Among the Tajik jihadists have been men and the women and children they bring with them. As the number of IS casualties climb and their fighters and families become disillusioned, Tajik prosecutors are reaching out to them.*

Months ago the Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs appeared to be determined to identify and prosecute all involved with the jihadists fighting in the area. Prosecutors now appear to be offering forgiveness in place of prosecution for those who sincerely repent and return to Tajikistan. The possibility of forgiveness contrasts sharply with traditional policies taken by its neighbors, especially Uzbekistan, where jihadists receiving pardons are more the exception than the rule. Perhaps Tajikistan sees this as a way to incentivize jihadists to abandon the IS and return from the military conflicts abroad.

Tajik jihadists who brought their families to the armed conflict make up fewer than half of their estimated numbers. The case of Gulru Olimovoi shows that some wives of jihadists are eager to return with their children after hearing that their husbands have been killed in the fighting. Faroukh Sharifov, a 25-year-old man from Kulob, Tajikistan, fled to Turkey and repented after a month of fighting for the IS. He was soon granted amnesty by Minister of Internal Affairs Ramazon Rakhimzod and helped to return home. Sharifov later appeared at a public event organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and spoke out against the IS. (<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/tajik-boy-speak-about-his-participation-in-syrian-war/26999034.html>)

*As Tajikistan shows mercy to repentant jihadists and those associated with them, perhaps the Tajik jihadists themselves will grow more likely to abandon their cause and return to Tajikistan. This could be a peaceful resolution to the volatile trend of Tajiks leaving to fight abroad for the IS. On the other hand, it is a salient prospect that Tajik jihadists will be allowed to return home and have their criminal involvement absolved. Those who might ostensibly be repentant could potentially facilitate networks of those sympathetic to the IS in Tajikistan and commit to acts of violence. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rose)***

Source: “Таджикистан: МВД простит граждан, добровольно вернувшихся с войн на Ближнем Востоке” (Tajikistan: Ministry of Internal Affairs forgives citizens who willingly return from fighting in the Middle East), Fergana Information Agency. 12 May 2015. <http://www.fergananews.com/news/23364>

Tajikistan: Ministry of Internal Affairs forgives citizens who willfully return from fighting in the Middle East

“Sources in the ministry reported . . . that dozens of citizens of Tajikistan already quit illegal armed formations in Iraq and Syria and today are located on Turkish territory, not deciding to return home out of fear of criminal punishment.”

“For example, the Islamic State presented a practically impossible ultimatum to the 25-year-old Tajik citizen Gulnaru Olimovoi. . . that her two young daughters and son ‘are property of the Islamic State’ and therefore she can only return home by herself, without her children.”

“Appearing on May 11th in Kulob . . . head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Ramazon Rakhimzoda reported that according to official sources, at present among fighters in Iraq and Syria are 384 citizens of Tajikistan and 40 of them arrived with families.”

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Tajikistan's Reaction to the Violence in Kunduz

4 May 2015

“...we have strengthened security on the parts where real aggression could come from. These two sections are the Shurobad and Panj Districts.” – said the head of Ministry of Defense press service.”

OE Watch Commentary: Clashes between government security forces and militants in the Kunduz Province of Afghanistan have caused alarm in Tajikistan, as the accompanying articles demonstrate. While the establishment of a “second line of defense” is significant, there are a couple of additional points not mentioned in these articles that provide insight into how Tajikistan is working to protect its border with Afghanistan. The timing of the announcement not long after the violence in Kunduz started suggests that this a reaction by the government of Tajikistan; however, the government had already planned to reinforce sections of the border, though previous plans did not mention any specific districts.

In one of the articles the Ministry of Defense press service mentioned that two districts on the Afghan-Tajik border are areas where violence could take place, but only the Panj District borders the Kunduz Province. The Shurobad District borders Afghanistan's Badakhshan Province, which is east of Kunduz and even separated from it by Takhar Province. Shurobad is one of only a few locations with a bridge across the Panj River (separating Afghanistan and Tajikistan) while Panj (District) is where the four Tajik border guards who were abducted in December were posted. They had reportedly been gathering firewood on one of the small islands in the Panj River when they were surrounded by unknown assailants from Afghanistan and captured. Negotiations for their release have been ongoing, and as of April they remain in an unknown location in Afghanistan.

The capture of the border guards is certainly a major case, but there have been other instances of people from Afghanistan attempting to take hostages just across the border in Tajikistan, some of it related to drug trafficking. There was an incident around two years ago in the Shurobad District, but the Tajiks being targeted were able to defend themselves and even killed their would-be captors, though one Tajik civilian was killed as well.

Overall, the creation of a second line of defense is not necessarily a knee-jerk reaction to the violence in Kunduz. Incidents of violence have been taking place in several areas on the Tajik-Afghan border for a number of years. It is possible that the violence in Kunduz caused these plans to be implemented more quickly, but ultimately, the second line of defense fits more into a long-term goal of border security. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: “Вторая линия обороны (A second line of defense),” Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star), 5 May 2015. <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/news-menu/v-armiyakh-sng/tadzhikistan/item/23508-vtoraya-liniya-oborony>

A second line of defense

The Ministry of Defense of Tajikistan and the National Security Committee announced the strengthening of security on the entire Tajik-Afghan border...it involves transfer of additional forces on the most dangerous sections of the border, including areas bordering the Kunduz Province.

Source: Yuldashev, Avaz. “Эксперт: Огонь войны из афганского Кундуза может перекинуться в Таджикистан (Expert: the flames of war from Afghanistan's Kunduz could spread to Tajikistan),” Asia-Plus, 28 April 2015. <http://www.asiaplus.tj/ru/news/ekspert-ogon-voiny-iz-afganskogo-kunduza-mozhet-perekinutsya-v-tadzhikistan>

No steps were taken to isolate the accumulation of Taliban forces in the Afghan province of Kunduz, where bloody clashes between government soldiers and the Taliban began last year and which the government of Afghanistan and the NATO contingent knew about, according to a Tajik expert on the situation, Kosimsho Iskandarov...“... government forces are in a large-scale operation against Taliban fighters in Kunduz and, in my opinion, they can achieve temporary success, but not stabilize the situation in the province in the long run.”

...“The war in Kunduz, which borders Tajikistan's Khatlon Oblast, directly threatens the southern region of our country and the government of Tajikistan and its allies need to be ready for all scenarios of a continuing war...”...Active fighting has taken place in Kunduz over the past three days and seized the Ali Abad and Imam Sahib Districts...the clashes have killed at least 45 militants...Additionally, at least 12 members of security forces are dead and wounded...

“Russian Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov said that the reduction in area of land rented from Kazakhstan will save more than four million dollars a year...”

OE Watch Commentary: *The most well known Russian military facilities in Central Asia are the Kant Airbase outside Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and the various locations in southern Tajikistan where the units that make up the Russian 201st Motorized Rifle Division are garrisoned. The accompanying article reports on a recent agreement between the governments of Russia and Kazakhstan on the lease of the Sary-Shagan missile test range near Lake Balkash, one of the lesser publicized Russian military facilities in the region. Most attention on the Russian presence in Kazakhstan is on the Cosmodrome at Baikonur, and while it is administered by the Russian government and does have several Russian security units (from the Interior Ministry and Federal Security Service), it is not a Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) facility. If Sary-Shagan does make*

the news, it is usually due to the population around the range angry about the facility causing environmental problems. There are a couple of things to consider about the announcement from Russia to renegotiate the lease and give a portion of the land of the test range to Kazakhstan.

The Russian deputy defense minister notes how the deal will save Russia around four million dollars annually and that Kazakhstan will be able to utilize this land to extract resources. This is not a significant sum of money for Kazakhstan to lose, since it is not in the same situation as Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan, both of which are much more reliant on Russian security assistance or an economic benefits package in exchange for hosting Russian military facilities. Conversely, Sary-Shagan does not have the same strategic value for Russia that the Kant Airbase or the 201st Motorized Rifle Division have, particularly in relation to security for the region. The Russian MoD also mentions that missile testing at Sary-Shagan will not be affected, though it is possible that testing had already been scaled back at the time of this deal.

*An agreement between Russia and Kazakhstan finalized in early 2014 included a provision that the latter become more involved in operations at the range. This led to some speculation that Kazakhstan will eventually take over the facility. This may not happen for several years at least, but it would something worth watching. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)***

Source: “Россия передала Казахстану территорию размером с Черногорию (Russia transferred territory the size of Montenegro to Kazakhstan),” Tengri News, 16 April 2015. http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/rossiya-peredala-kazahstanu-territoriyu-razmerom-273347/

Russia transferred territory the size of Montenegro to Kazakhstan

Moscow and Astana signed documents on the withdrawal of the lease and the transfer to Kazakhstan the unused Russian land with an area of 1.6 million hectares...the land is the “Sary-Shagan” (test) range, located on the Karaganda and Zhambyl oblasts...

...According to the Ministry of Defense of Russia, the new borders of the range “will fully provide testing of new weapons and military equipment.”... (Shoigu) added that he established a new amount for the lease payments for use of the testing range... Commenting on the decision to transfer the unused lands, Russian Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov said that the reduction in area of land rented from Kazakhstan will save more than four million dollars a year...

...the deputy minister noted that the land being returned to Kazakhstan will be used for resources like oil, gold, and construction materials...

“Afghan suppliers of heroin always appear to be some kind of semi-mythical villain...No one has ever seen them, except in journalist’s reports from Afghanistan.”

OE Watch Commentary: A number of studies and news reports on drug trafficking in Central Asia have reported on the various routes and methods of traffickers and periodic arrests of couriers or distributors. The accompanying article reports on the recent arrest of Abdul Rahman, a citizen of Afghanistan, outside Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, for drug trafficking. It notes how Rahman’s arrest puts a face on the drug trafficking coming out of Afghanistan, and there are a couple of additional things mentioned in the article that provide a little more nuanced view of drug trafficking in Central Asia, and in Kyrgyzstan in particular.

The article describes the transit route that heroin takes from Afghanistan, through Tajikistan and into Kyrgyzstan, before it moves on to Kazakhstan and Russia. This is a fairly established route, but there has been more activity in the past several months along the route that could have contributed to Rahman traveling to Kyrgyzstan and eventually getting arrested. There have been reports of Border Guards in Tajikistan working with the country’s Drug Control Agency to intercept and seize more drug shipments of traffickers coming from Afghanistan (see: February 2015 OE Watch, “Conflicts on the Tajik-Afghan Border”). These seizures have been taking place for a number of years, but if the article’s reference to Rahman having his drug shipments lost in Tajikistan is true, his presence in Kyrgyzstan to set up new contacts and reestablish a trafficking route could be a consequence of the recent increase in seizures.

Concerns about instability spreading from Afghanistan continue to be discussed in the region. While the arrest of Rahman may not be the type of instability many have predicted, since his arrival involved drug trafficking and not violence, it does demonstrate how someone from Afghanistan could get into Kyrgyzstan and even travel across the country. Agents from the Interior Ministry apparently tracked Rahman not long after he entered Kyrgyzstan, though they waited several days to arrest him. The article notes that he entered the country through a “hole” in the border at the town of Arka in the Batken Oblast. If this is true, his illegal entrance into Kyrgyzstan did not come over the mountains along the southern edge of Batken like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan did during its incursions in 1999 and 2000, but rather at a border town in the northwest of the oblast. Overall, Rahman’s arrest shows that criminal activity crossing the border might be just as much of an issue as any extremist group attempting to infiltrate Kyrgyzstan or the region. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: Zhuk, Oleg. “Афганский бросок на Бишкек (The Afghan throw to Bishkek),” Delo №... (Case number...), 10 April 2015. <http://delo.kg/index.php/krim/8463-afganskij-brosokna-bishkek>

The Afghan throw to Bishkek

The first drug dealer from Afghanistan personally risked turning up in Kyrgyzstan with his “goods” and wound up behind bars. Afghan suppliers of heroin always appear to be some kind of semi-mythical villain...No one has ever seen them, except in journalist’s reports from Afghanistan...Abdul Rahman, a 52 year-old Afghan citizen from the city of Kunduz, was arrested on March 17 near Bishkek by operatives from the Counter Narcotics Directorate of the MVD of Kyrgyzstan...

Rahman – a wholesale dealer of narcotics is highly respected in Afghanistan and speaks fluent Uzbek...transit of Afghan heroin through Kyrgyzstan is now carried out like this: narcotics from Afghanistan are moved in small batches to Tajikistan...batches accumulate in Tajikistan and Tajik traffickers hire Uzbek and Kyrgyz couriers living in the Batken Oblast...In Bishkek the heroin is transferred to Kazakh trucks...

Security agencies – in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Russia – usually catch couriers. The senders and receivers of the criminal “goods” are very rarely caught. Thus, the arrest of Abdul Rahman became a rare occurrence...The situation was that Abdul lost the trust of (his) Afghan partners...Security forces intercepted the narcotics, then Tajik deceiving partners appropriated them. Rahman, hugely in debt and desperate, personally tried to set up a new distribution channel...entering Kyrgyzstan through one of the many holes in the border, Abdul Rahman settled in a hotel in the border village of Arka, Leylek District, Batken Oblast. He carefully set up links and negotiated, developed a route, and in 3-4 days traveled to Bishkek. Convinced that the channel was organized, Abdul Rahman appeared in Sokuluk District (Chuy Oblast) with a trial batch of “goods”...

OE Watch Commentary: China's "One Belt, One Road" motto refers the country's investments to build roads, railways, ports and other infrastructure projects connecting the ASEAN region to the Baltics. Naturally, this route passes through the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. While terrorism and insurgency are commonly cited as the main security threats that would require some form of Chinese military intervention, an article in Zhongguojingbao (Chinese Business Report) suggests that internal issues in Central Asia may be more likely to disrupt the One Belt, One Road vision than external ones.

For example, the article cites civil strife, but not terrorism or insurgency, as a risk to China's investments along the One Belt, One Road routes. Ten years after the events in May 2005 in Andijon, Uzbekistan, in which several hundred citizens were killed in hybrid actions of violent uprising and protest, and more than three years since sixteen laborers were killed in protests in Zhanaozen, Kazakhstan,

the threat of civil strife in Central Asia remains a key concern to China. However, the largest instance of civil strife in the post-Soviet era in Central Asia was riots between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010. These riots did not result in any form of external intervention to suppress the violence, but there were rumors and discussions at that time about whether China, Russia, or a concert of actors would intervene to suppress the violence, in which more than 400 were people were killed.

The key question is, what would it take for China in the future to intervene in Central Asia to protect its more than 40 billion dollars of investments and preserve the One Belt, One Road vision? Thus far, China has left little indication that is preparing its own forces for any intervention or leveraging the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) or the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure for such an intervention there. This means that China may be concerned about civil strife, but feels that such threats are not imminent, since the region's leaders are still in good health and, in any case, China may be able count on Russian forces to take the lead in any such intervention. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Source: "How Chinese Companies Can Safely Embark on One Belt One Road (中国企业如何安全走一带一路)" Zhongguojingbao.com, 7 May 2015.

How Chinese Companies Can Safely Embark on One Belt One Road (中国企业如何安全走一带一路)

Today China is experiencing major changes and is still in transition, In foreign investment, Chinese enterprises have the advantage of location, knowledge capital, productivity and other micro-level aspects. Local conditions are perhaps China's competitive advantage. In addition to domestic enterprises that adapt to the characteristics of swimming in muddy waters outside, it is undeniable that good bilateral political relations in Central Asia are also an effective hedge and make up for issues of "institutional quality".

Some scholars use data from 2003 to 2010 of China's investment in 131 countries, which shows that the longer the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the host country, the more number of senior leaders from both sides and the peoples have visits. This leads more to the promotion of China's foreign direct investment and has a very significant positive effect. Friendly bilateral diplomatic activity enables some of the more sensitive and important investments (such as resource-seeking investments) and has played a role in supporting bilateral diplomatic activity.

“To better investment guarantees and provide political risk insurance to foreign private investors, including the risk of expropriation, currency transfer restriction, breach of contract, war and civil strife, governments should strengthen the capacity of member states to attract and protect foreign investment.”

“Changing the individuals alone is not enough. There is an urgent need to lay institutional foundations in the security services, so that they do not become a hostage to the personal mood of the commander.”

OE Watch Commentary: Jordan's internal security is protected by four distinct, and at times rival, institutions. On paper, the Jordanian Armed Forces and the intelligence services report to the king, the Public Security Force (Jordan's police) reports to the prime minister, and the gendarmerie (Jordan's crack riot police) reports to the minister of interior. In practice, as the article excerpted here notes, the lines of command and control are more opaque.

On May 19, King Abdullah of Jordan accepted the resignation of his minister of interior, and dismissed the directors of Jordan's Public Security Directorate and the gendarmerie. Protests in Jordan's southern city of Ma'an and the reported torture and death of a member of an influential tribe at the hands of Jordan's security forces were the catalysts for the dismissals. King Abdullah has repeatedly replaced top state officials when public criticism becomes too great, and this recent shuffle occurs following months of increasing restrictions on political opposition and activism in the Kingdom.

The King's dismissal of three of Jordan's top security officials was met with celebrations in Jordan's southern city of Ma'an, in recent years a center of protests against the government. However, Fahd al-Khitan, one of Jordan's most influential columnists and a leading critic of state security abuses, was more skeptical of the move. Writing for Al Ghad, Jordan's leading independent daily newspaper, al-Khitan makes the case for structural reforms of Jordan's security services. Al-Khitan advocates institutionalization of command and control, as well as accountability to Jordan's elected politicians.

Internal stability and security have always been priorities of Jordan's monarchy. Al-Khitan points out that the current regional situation increases this concern, as unrest and violence in Syria, Iraq, and the Sinai could threaten Jordan's security. King Abdullah's promises to promote reform and democratization, however, will seem increasingly empty if complaints about heavy-handed securitization continue. **End OE Watch Commentary (Beeny)**

Source: Al-Khitan, Fahd. Ayna yuqawadna al-taghrir fee al-muwasasat al-aminiya? (Where will the change in security institutions lead us?? Al Ghad, 19 May 2015. <http://goo.gl/yXjvcg>

Where will the change in security institutions lead us?

For many years, civil state institutions have been party to conflicts and disputes: the court and the intelligence services; the government and the intelligence services; the court and the government; and—in earlier stages—the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The recent constitutional amendments, which directly linked the appointment of army commanders and the director of general intelligence to his majesty the king, left other security apparatuses, Public Security, the gendarmerie, and above them the minister of the interior, in the gray area. Public Security is linked to the prime minister; the gendarmerie is linked to the interior ministry. This was reported repeatedly, but in truth the relationship—and the limits of power and authority—remained opaque in practice. Even between Public Security and the gendarmerie there was an overlap in missions, requiring intervention from higher authorities to resolve clashes that occurred more than once in the field.

More recently, the issue exceeded its abstract institutional aspect and took on a purely personal character. According to reports, the interior minister's personal relationship with the director of public security was nearly severed, and the latter entered into a conspiratorial alliance against the minister.

Thus, before the recent problem in Ma'an, it was already necessary to change the equation. The message from what occurred is that there is no leniency or tolerance for any shortcomings in the security sector, especially as we are in a regional circumstance unlikely to accept any margin of error.

However, changing the individuals alone is not enough. There is an urgent need to lay institutional foundations in the security services so that they do not become a hostage to the personal mood of the commander, to define the powers and authorities in order to prevent overlapping missions or competition in the field, and to grant the political level of the state the right to intervene and correct the imbalances.

As for the priority accorded to the subject of internal security in Jordan, which is described as the basis and essence of stability, it does not mean in any way that the security institutions—or their leaders—should override politics in decision making and become the first in credit and accountability.

That is the important message in the last royal step, and it should be translated into policy and a program of action. No one is above accountability.

“It is certain that small and large capitols will not be comfortable with this “diplomatic storm” which threatens their roles and interests in their backyards and critical areas of their traditional foreign policies.”

OE Watch Commentary: Many international actors were surprised by Saudi Arabia's decision to begin military operation in Yemen on 26 March. With the Saudi campaign now nearly two months old, concern is growing in the region about the objectives and prospects for the campaign. In the excerpted article, Urayb al-Rantawi, the director of the University of Jordan's Quds Center for Political Studies and a leading Jordanian political analyst, expresses concern about regional destabilization stemming from recent Saudi initiatives. Writing in Al Maqar, an independent Jordanian newspaper, Rantawi describes the effects Saudi Arabia's policies could have in Yemen and Syria, as well as potential reactions from Turkey, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.

In Yemen, Saudi Arabia has pursued a maximalist position, demanding to host the Yemen peace negotiations in Riyadh, despite U.S. suggestions that they be held on neutral ground in Geneva. The first round of the conference was held 17 May in Riyadh. Members of Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi's General People's Congress and the fractious Yemeni opposition party, Al-Islah, attended, but representatives of the al Houthis were absent, making the conference's success doubtful.

Rantawi also questions rumors of Saudi Arabian cooperation with Turkey against President Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Although both countries believe that a solution in Syria requires Assad to cede power, they have been unable to agree about what should succeed him. Turkey has supported Syria's Muslim Brotherhood since early in the conflict, but Saudi Arabia's relations with the group are more ambivalent. As Rantawi notes, it will be difficult for Turkey to surrender patronage of the Syrian opposition to Saudi Arabia.

Rantawi also explains that moves by new Saudi Arabian monarch King Salman to resolve the split between Palestinian parties Hamas and Fatah could alienate Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, both of which consider the Hamas-affiliated Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. Moreover, Egypt has traditionally been the prime sponsor of negotiations between the Palestinian parties and Israel. Saudi moves could be seen as a threat to Egyptian interests and its traditional regional role. **End OE Watch Commentary (Beeny)**

Source: Al-Rantawi, Urayb. Asifa Hazm...Diplomasia (Decisive Storm...Diplomacy)" Al Maqar, 02 May 2015. <http://maqar.com/?id=81939>

Decisive Storm...Diplomacy

Saudi diplomacy is moving actively along three tracks, alongside the widest military initiative in the kingdom's history. The first track is Yemeni, where Riyadh insists on hosting and sponsoring the "Yemeni dialogue conference", heedless of the other side's reluctance to participate...

The second track is Syrian, with the news that Riyadh is seeking with its allies in the Syrian opposition, its friends in the region, and its partners in the GCC to host an expanded conference for the Syrian opposition. Thus far, we do not know what is meant by 'expanded'. Will the armed opposition join, or not? Will the Syrian [Muslim] Brotherhood participate, or not? Will Jabhat al Nusra or those who represent it be invited to the conference?...

The third track is Palestinian,...the kingdom is occupied with resuming its role to mediate between the Palestinians to achieve reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas. Does Saudi intend to pursue a "Mecca 2" after the failure of Mecca 1? Have they already consulted with Egypt, the "official sponsor" of Palestinian reconciliation and dialogue? Is it now time to welcome a high-ranking Hamas delegation to Riyadh, before reconciliation, and in the context of preparation for it? What about the positions of Arab and Palestinian opponents of Hamas, especially in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates? Will Cairo be comfortable with Riyadh invading its sphere in this way?

In any case, it seems that we are entering a stage full of Saudi surprises. After years and decades of stagnation and monotony [Operation] Decisive Storm came as a great surprise to all observers, and it certainly took states and governments off guard. The internal changes--unprecedented in the history of the kingdom in terms of form, content, speed of implementation, and depth of impact—in turn take everyone by surprise. The diplomatic movement—if estimates about it are correct—will be a surprise occurrence to the Kingdom's friends and allies, as well as its adversaries and opponents...it is certain that small and large capitols will not be comfortable with this "diplomatic storm" which threatens their roles and interests in their backyards and critical areas of their traditional foreign policies.

OE Watch Commentary: *Iranian strategists have embraced the concept of duality for centuries: rather than streamline government institutions, much Persian literature suggests that wise leaders should duplicate them so that a ruler can play institutions off each other and have them inform on the other and compete. Perhaps the best example within the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the military: the country has cultivated not only a regular military, but also the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Traditionally, the regular military was charged with territorial defense, while the IRGC was responsible for defense of the revolution against threats both external and internal. In practice, the IRGC was the more elite force privy to greater resources and higher technology, while the regular military was largely where conscripts did their time before heading to the university or to work.*

The regime's approach to the army may be changing, however, if the excerpted speech by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is any indication. He emphasizes the importance of Islam and Islamic ideology to the army. His citation of chapter 8 of the Quran—named Anfal, or the spoils of war, is also significant, as it described an early battle in which Muhammad's forces triumphed against pagans and Jews. In more contemporary religious discussion it is often used to justify religiously tinged warfare. In effect, Khamenei is announcing that not only the IRGC, but also the regular army should be considered forces for the defense, if not propagation of religion.

*Also important is Khamenei's acknowledgement of the progress and diversity of Iran's indigenous military industry. While United Nations Security Council resolutions have prohibited Iranian export of weaponry, they place few limits on Iranian military imports. Nevertheless, Khamenei's embrace and endorsement of Iran's indigenous weapons program suggests Iran will continue to rely on its own weapons programs out of fear that dependence on outside suppliers represents too great a vulnerability. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

Source: “Biyanat dar Didar Jama’e Farmandahan va Karkanan-e Artesh-e Jomhuri Islami Iran” (“Remarks in a Meeting with a Group of Commanders and Military Personnel of the Islamic Republic of Iran”), Khamenei.ir, 19 April 2015. <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=29472>

Remarks in a Meeting with a Group of Commanders

One of the characteristics of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army is revolutionary and religious insight and religious commitment. This is a very great claim. Religious commitment means that the Army is committed to all rules and regulations that Islam has laid down for armed forces and military activities...

Another characteristic that our Armed Forces should pay attention to - fortunately, they have paid attention to it and this is completely clear - is acting on the holy verse “And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of God and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom God knows.” (Qur. 8:60). This verse means that you should not be taken by surprise. It means that if an enemy attacks you, you should not suffer a loss because of lack of resources, weapons, ammunitions and preparedness. This is because your loss will be the people’s loss. Your loss will be Islam’s loss. As I said, the achievements that our Armed Forces have made until today in this regard are exemplary. Fortunately, our country enjoys an acceptable and even outstanding rank in terms of scientific and technological achievements. But military achievements, and accomplishments in the area of weapons are among the best achievements of the country. The military equipment and resources that we have managed to provide in the course of these years are extraordinary considering the limited time that we had and considering the pressures and sanctions which were imposed on us.

Fortunately, our Armed Forces have managed to accomplish - either on their own or by benefiting from others’ help - great feats in different areas. They have done so with planning and by benefiting from scientific and technological organizations. This should continue. What I want to stress is that the achievements of the country in the area of weapons and military preparedness should continue. Our enemies do not want this. Today, one of the tools to exert propaganda pressures on the Islamic Republic is this issue - the issue of missiles, drones, military resources and the achievements that have been made by our youth inside the country and without receiving any help from such and such a country. They do not want these achievements to exist and they want to prevent them. Reason and common sense - based on this holy verse - tell us that you should continue this path...

When it comes to defense, our people have complete solidarity and nothing can influence it. This is the first point. The second point is that the Islamic Republic will keep itself prepared. It will preserve its preparedness. This is the second point.

All the organizations of the Islamic Republic - ranging from the Ministry of Defense to the Islamic Republic of Iran Army, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and different other organizations - should consider this to be their guideline. They should increase preparedness in the area of weapons, in the area of organization and in the area of what exerts the most influence in the armed forces - that is to say, morale and mental preparedness. Fortunately, our forces, our youth and our courageous men inside the country have no shortcomings in this regard.

“Drawing youth to decadence and other such things are very significant matters.”

OE Watch Commentary: *When it comes to maintaining domestic security, the Islamic Republic relies not only on the Basij, a paramilitary organization now folded into the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), but also the Law Enforcement Forces, an often equally paramilitary national police force. In the excerpted address given to leaders of the Law Enforcement Forces, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei exposes many of the social vulnerabilities which he fears could erode the success and religious character of the Islamic Republic of Iran.*

Khamenei acknowledges major problems with drug use, rape, and sexual harassment, and complains about Iranian youth partying illegally. Here, paranoia infuses the ayatollah's remarks, as he suggests a plot afoot in which "certain centers" purposely try to separate good Muslim youth from God. In this implication he is voicing a similar belief to that which has been propagated in the Sunni world by more radical factions of the Muslim Brotherhood and by Salafi clerics in Saudi Arabia, who denounce manifestations of Western culture permeating the Middle East as a deliberate plot to undermine Islam. Of additional concern to Khamenei is the behavior of the nouveau-riche who "get into expensive and fashionable cars and mess around on the streets." Not addressed directly, but underlying this statement, is his concern that the families of these ostentatious youth have achieved their material success based on their connections to or participation in the government of the Islamic Republic.

*Because of these myriad challenges, Khamenei charges the police not only with enforcing criminal codes, but also with promoting Islam. The Law Enforcement Forces may not, in theory, be as tied to religion as the Basij within the IRGC, but if Khamenei's speech is any indication, that will soon change. Faced with a disenfranchised youth, it appears Khamenei could be setting the stage for a renewed cultural revolution. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)***

Source: "Biyanat dar Didar Farmandihan-e Niru-ye Entezami Jomhuri Islam" ("Remarks in a Meeting with Leaders of the Law Enforcement Forces of the Islamic Republic"), Khamenei.ir, 26 April 2015. <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=29531>

Remarks in a Meeting with Leaders of the Law Enforcement Forces

...When we speak about social and individual security, we do not mean that you should only try to prevent individuals from being mugged on the street when they go from home to their office, shop and school... There are other areas of security which are more delicate but much more dangerous. One example is insecurity stemming from dealing drugs. If the people - particularly and mainly the youth - who go to parks, tourist attractions, streets and schools are not secure from drug dealing, this insecurity is very dangerous. If our youth are not secure from those who draw them to decadence and wrongdoings, this is a great insecurity. You are probably aware of the situation. We too have received certain reports that by spending massive amounts of money and by taking orders from certain centers, some people try to draw our youth to decadence and wrongdoings in night-time parties held in different places.

This is different from the wrong and irreligious move that a youth may make alone. This is drawing youth to dangerous wrongdoings. Therefore, you should not allow them to do so. You should prevent it. Imagine that our streets are safe from different forms of physical harm, but our youth are not safe from different temptations from inside schools, universities, parks and stores and from friendships in local streets. From these places, some people draw our youth to night-time parties and familiarize them with decadence and different wrongdoings. Another example is rape. These are things that are among different areas of security. If we have a kind of security that does not include these things, then it is not, in fact, security. After all, drugs, harassing women and drawing youth to decadence and other such things are very significant matters.

Another issue is that according to what I have heard, some youth who are drunk with wealth - with arrogance resulting from wealth - get into expensive and fashionable cars and mess around on the streets. This way, they make streets insecure. This too is a type of insecurity. You should have plans and work hard in the face of any kind of insecurity. These are things which form the different aspects of security.

Another important issue which I have discussed many times is the issue of the power of the Police Force. The Police Force is the manifestation of the authority of the Islamic Republic in establishing security. One of the responsibilities of the Islamic Republic is to establish security in society. As you explained, moral and social security is one of our responsibilities. It is one of the responsibilities of the Islamic Republic and therefore, we cannot abandon it. The Police Force is the manifestation of this security. It is the agent which is in the middle of this arena. Therefore, you should have power. You should be able to act in a powerful way.

“The change of government hasn't changed the administrative process for detainees.”

OE Watch Commentary: Mehdi Karrubi, long a stalwart of Islamic Republic politics, twice was speaker of parliament (1989-1992, 2000-2004) and subsequently stood twice for president, facing Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the eventual victor, both in 2005 and 2009. In 2005 he went to sleep with results showing him in first place, but when he woke up he was in third—and eliminated. After he subsequently alleged irregularities, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei chided him. In the 2009 elections, widely acknowledged by many Iranians, analysts, and the international press to be fraudulent, he came in fourth place out of four, with less than one percent of the vote. For Ahmadinejad the 2009 elections were a Pyrrhic victory: he won an election but largely lost legitimacy. Karrubi, on the other hand, became a symbol of relative integrity in defeat. And, with his political career largely over and therefore less willing to self-censor, he became a greater threat to the regime.

In the wake of the 2009 post-election unrest, Karrubi spoke out against detainee sexual abuse, earning him both further reprimands from ruling authorities and attacks from Basij paramilitaries and vigilantes, who, on various occasions, fired shots at and vandalized his property. After the outbreak of Arab Spring protests in Tunisia and Egypt and fearing that similar protests could erupt in Iran, Iranian security forces arrested not only Karrubi, but also Mir-Hossein Mousavi, a former prime minister and unsuccessful 2009 presidential candidate, and his wife, Zahra Rahnavard. Charged initially with Mofsed-e-filarz (being “corrupt on earth”), a capital crime in Iran, the three were ultimately sentenced to house arrest on lesser charges. They were, however, still subject to abuse by the Intelligence Ministry.

Many Iranians hoped that the situation for the detained reform-minded politicians would change after Hassan Rouhani's 2013 election. After all, he projected an image of moderation, and many analysts argued that his first-round victory was the result of capturing the hopes of reform-minded Iranians. The excerpted article below, describing and reproducing an open letter from Karrubi's wife, herself a former parliamentarian, to the intelligence minister suggests, however, that nothing has changed. Karrubi (and his associates) are still under house arrest and suffer arbitrary abuse four years after their detention. This suggests that Rouhani either has been powerless to effect change or, more likely since the intelligence minister is his own appointee, simply is disinterested in the cause of reform now that he has won his election.

Iranian authorities may also be concerned that the unrest which marked the disputed 2009 election may not be far from the surface, and so the continued arrest of reformist leaders is warranted. Regardless, it seems Rouhani's reformism has not met the hopes of many who saw in him a possibility for change. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

Source: “Fatameh Karrubi dar Namehaye beh Vazir-e Ettela'at: Hamvareh Shahad Raftarha-ye Faraqanuni ba mahavar qadarat budeh va hastim” (“Fatameh Karrubi in a Letter to the Intelligence Minister: We Always Witness Extrajudicial Actions with an Emphasis on Power”), Saham News, 3 May 2015. <http://sahamnews.org/2015/05/281769/>

Open Letter from Fatameh Karrubi to Intelligence Minister

Fatameh Karrubi, wife of Mehdi Karrubi, in a letter to the intelligence minister of the Rouhani government complained about the irresponsibility of the Ministry of Intelligence with regard to the routine and current institution about [house] arrest. According to the report of Saham, the former Member of Parliament in her letter with regard to the past and present nature of imprisonment wrote, “Contrary to popular belief, the change of government hasn't changed the administrative process for detainees, but in practice we are experiencing greater irresponsibility with regard to restrictions of the house arrests... It has been more than 21 months since the security apparatus of the government of prudence and hope [i.e., the Rouhani administration] took over the responsibility of administering the house arrest of reformist leaders.”

“The Nigerian Boko Haram militants were in Mosul to take part in a military training course conducted by Islamic State.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 13 May Iraqi Kurdistan region’s Basnews published an article stating that five Boko Haram members were killed in Mosul, Iraq. This article, if true, would represent the first time that Boko Haram members have been reported killed in Syria or Iraq since Boko Haram pledged loyalty to Islamic State on 7 March and Islamic State accepted the pledge on 12 March. Despite that Nigerians have been reported transiting via Turkey to Syria and Iraq since early 2015 and that it is possible that Boko Haram members have been killed there, this report should be viewed with urgency, but also caution.

The issue of Islamic State recruitment of militants from Africa and the African diaspora is increasingly a concern for countries like

Nigeria. As the Islamic State portrays itself as a global caliphate and especially markets its expansion in Africa in its propaganda, it can leverage militants from Africa and the African diaspora who are in its ranks to encourage even more of them to travel to Syria or Iraq. The Islamic State, however, can also encourage them to stay closer to home and carry on there now that the Islamic State has announced a new Islamic State in West Africa Province, which is intended to be Boko Haram’s area of operations.

Without further corroboration, the Nigerian military will likely take note of the possibility of the Islamic State training Boko Haram. However, the military may consider this specific report from Basnews with caution. Nonetheless, there is an increasing recognition in Nigeria that it is likely only a matter of time before some Nigerians are seen publicly in Islamic State videos and other reporting from Iraq and Syria, and that the Islamic State will continue to seek new recruits from the Nigerian homeland, other countries in Africa, and the African diaspora.

End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)

Source: “Boko Haram Members Killed in Mosul,” Basnews, 13 May 2015.

Boko Haram Members Killed in Mosul

Mosul Youth Resistance Movement killed a number of Boko Haram militants in Mosul. Saed Mamuzini, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Mosul spokesperson told BasNews that the Mosul Youth Resistance Movement, which was recently formed to act against Islamic State (IS) in Mosul, attacked the Boko Haram insurgents in the Dargaza neighbourhood of eastern Mosul, killing 5 insurgents. The Nigerian Boko Haram militants were in Mosul to take part in a military training course conducted by Islamic State. Boko Haram, a radical Islamic group, has kidnapped and killed thousands of people in areas under their control in northeastern Nigeria. The group has pledged allegiance to IS and appear to be in close cooperation. This is the first report of the presence of Boko Haram militants in Iraq.

A MODERN HISTORY OF THE FREE SYRIAN ARMY IN DARAA

By Lucas Winter, Foreign Military Studies Office

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

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



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

“... near unanimity of opinion that there is no reason to celebrate...”

OE Watch Commentary: “Sinai Day,” a holiday held on 25 April to commemorate the day in 1982 when the Israeli Army definitively withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula, was a somber one this year. The provincial governor’s office issued a statement noting that all celebrations were off, and instead the day would be marked by honoring those who died in the war with Israel. As noted in the first excerpt, the decision was hardly controversial and reflected dismay at the government’s inability to definitively get the security situation in the peninsula under control. Despite a massive clampdown, the Sinai-based Islamic State (IS) affiliate continues to mount deadly attacks against Egyptian military positions in the province.

Over the past few months the Egyptian military has set up a series of checkpoints along the 50-km stretch of road linking al-Arish, the capital of northern Sinai, to Rafah along the border with Gaza. On 2 April IS rebels carried out a multipronged attack on at least five of these positions, which killed over a dozen Egyptian soldiers, including one who was taken captive and forced to speak on video before being executed on camera.

The main attack targeted the “Obaidat Checkpoint” in Sheikh Zuwaid, approximately halfway between al-Arish and the Rafah border crossing with Gaza. The second excerpt provides some detail on the tactics employed by the attackers. Shortly after the attacks, Egyptian newspapers reported that the checkpoints were being reinforced with heavier weaponry, as the third excerpt notes. On 5 May Egyptian forces repelled a new attack on the Obaidat checkpoint. According to the fourth excerpted media report, 30 attackers approached the base in 6 separate 4x4 vehicles. After about an hour of fighting and a few casualties in their ranks, the jihadis withdrew. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)**



Source: Ahmed Eleiba. “Nothing to celebrate,” al-Ahram (English). 23 April 2015. <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/11097/17/%E2%80%98Nothing-to-celebrate%E2%80%99.aspx>

“Sinai Day this year will be marked by the placing of wreaths on the graves of martyrs who fell in the war and beside the commemorative statue,” read the official statement announcing the cancellation of the usual ceremonies accompanying the anniversary of the liberation of the Sinai from Israeli occupation. The last Israeli soldier withdrew from Sinai on 25 April 1982. The reasons for the cancellation are obvious: the continuing war against terror in the peninsula has led to a near unanimity of opinion that there is no reason to celebrate.

Source: “Sinai security stymied by continued terrorist attacks,” al-Monitor, 21 April 2015. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/04/egypt-wilayat-sinai-salafist-jihad-attack-photos.html>

... The jihadist explained how the attack was carried out, saying, “It was a multifaceted attack. As usual, it began with a plan to deceive, whereby shots were fired at five [army] positions in various cities at the same time — in el-Arish, Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah. This was aimed at providing a cover for the main operation and confusing the army command, while the main attack was carried out on the Obaidat base. In the beginning, militants carrying light Kalashnikovs and hand grenades infiltrated behind the sand dunes placed by the army. They took advantage of [the dunes] as a [security] gap to avoid being seen. Then, others fired rocket-propelled grenades at the base from another direction to confuse [the army], while heavy gunfire was directed from another position. All of this was aimed at providing cover for the members who infiltrated and used hand grenades and machine guns. Thus began the battle, which ended easily in favor of Wilayat Sinai. The group killed forces stationed at the position, seized two armored personnel carriers and captured a soldier.” The jihadist noted several factors that helped facilitate the mission. First was choosing to attack at 5 a.m., as it is a time when the soldiers are not alert. This is evident in the photos published by Wilayat Sinai, in

(continued)

Continued: No Joy in Sinai

which the soldiers are in a state of inaction that does not suggest they are at war. The second factor involves exploiting military fortifications, using them for the opposite of their intended purpose. The militants took advantage of the sand piles placed by the army to protect against car bombs as a cover to infiltrate into the base without being seen, engaging in clashes from inside with total ease.

Source:

يزات عسكرية جديدة تصل لأمانة الطريق الدولي تحت غطاء الأباتشي
Moustafa Sangar. "New military reinforcement reach the checkpoints along the international highway under Apache cover," al-Shorouk, 4 April 2015. <http://www.shorouknews.com/mobile/news/view.aspx?cdate=04042015&id=9a793705-48d6-40dc-84b6-86a1b56a6c35>

The [Egyptian] Armed Forces sent new security reinforcements to the checkpoints along the international highway east of the city of al-Arish, in order to better equip them against attacks. Apache helicopters provided aerial cover for the convoy transporting 155-mm mobile Howitzer which will be placed in the checkpoints and surrounded by barriers made of dirt and rocks... at the village's checkpoints, soldiers are rehabilitating the checkpoints by building new barriers and monitoring for any movement from various points, including on the top of water towers and behind a M-60 above the health clinic in a state of full alert. Tanks have been dispatched to fortify the armored vehicles behind the barriers in all 17 fixed checkpoints located along the 50-kilometer-long international highway.

Source:

تفاصيل معركة لمدة ساعة بين الجيش وإرهابيين استهدفوا كمين العبيدات
"Details on one-hour battle between the army and terrorists targeting the Obaidat Checkpoint," el-Fagr, 5 May 2015. <http://www.elfagr.org/1732263>

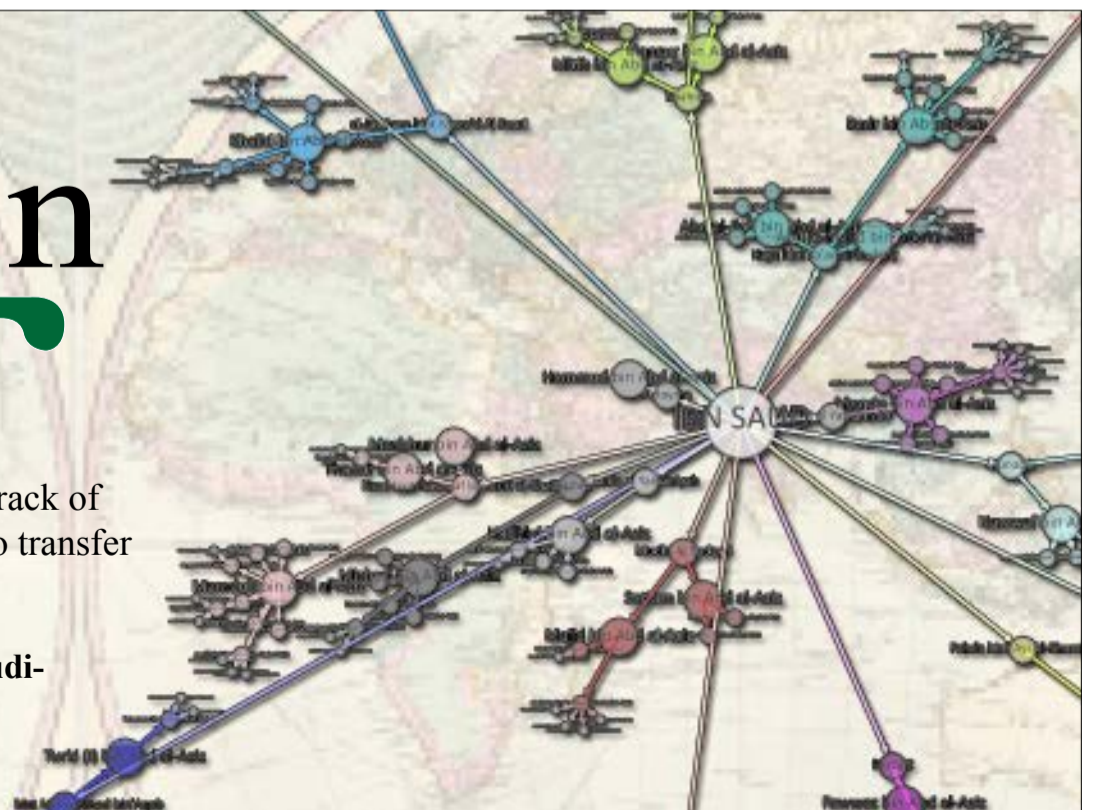
It began when the armed forces saw six 4x4 vehicles transporting 30 gunmen belonging to the Bait al-Maqdis organization. Violent clashes took place between the two sides for nearly an hour, which led to three takfiris being killed and five injured. The clashes ended with the withdrawal of the attackers...

Mapping Saudi Arabia's Succession

By LUCAS WINTER
Foreign Military Studies Office

This paper aims to serve as a guide for keeping track of the key players as the Saudi royal family seeks to transfer power to a new generation of princes.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Saudi-Succession/Saudi-Succession.pdf>



“... make sure not to give any promises that they are coming back...”

OE Watch Commentary: The “*inghimasi*,” a term which may be roughly translated as “suicide fighter,” is arguably the most important soldier for the Islamic State (IS). Suicide fighters often work in tandem with suicide bombers, but the two are different in that the *inghimasi* are usually on foot, armed with grenades and light weapons, and operating in a group, while IS suicide bombers tend to sit alone at the helm of explosives-laden vehicles. On the battlefield suicide fighters function as shock troops, seeking to loosen up enemy defenses. They are also dispatched in small teams to strike nonmilitary targets, as in the attacks on the Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli in late January and the Bardo Museum in Tunis this past March. They go into battle with the expectation of not returning.

On 29 April a photograph circulated online depicting a directive allegedly issued by the upper echelons of IS leadership and attributed to an Aleppo branch office. The document, which was translated by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) and is excerpted alongside this commentary, calls for the immediate mobilization of Syrian fighters to support IS battles in Iraq's al-Anbar and Salahuddin Provinces. In particular, it requests that suicide bombers and suicide fighters be mobilized.

The CTC translation defines *inghimasi* fighters as “those who submerge in enemy's line with no intent to come back alive.” This definition is true to the term's Arabic meaning (to plunge, become immersed), while also capturing the important assumption of no return. The term is fairly new and began appearing with some regularity in Arabic-language media in the second half of 2013. It seems to be a standard category for IS fighters, as shown by the excerpted testimonial from a Tunisian IS defector, who upon joining the group was given a choice between registering as a suicide bomber, an *inghimasi*, or a regular fighter.

Source: “Let your blood be [the Caliphate's] fuel,” Islamic State Aleppo Province. 27 April 2015. (translation via: <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/ctc-perspectives-let-your-blood-be-the-caliphates-fuel>)

Do not let the filthy Rafida get your brothers in those wilayat while there is still blood in your veins. None of you should save any efforts to support them. Defend God's religion, and call upon the brothers in your regions to join the fight, headed by martyr seekers and *inghimasi*s [those who submerge in enemy's lines with no intent to come back alive]. Make sure that they are religiously dedicated, patient ones and war experts who don't look back, fight and don't lay down their weapons until they get killed or God grants them victory. When picking them, make sure that they voluntarily want to go [to fight in those two provinces]. Also, make sure not to give any promises that they are coming back or taking any leave before God grants his worshipers victory...

Source: “Ex-ISIS Testimony - Abu Musab al-Tunisi Speaks of His Experiences in ISIS and Why He Left?” 23 February 2014. <http://justpaste.it/hcgn>

- ...6. So when I arrived they took my personal details and they asked do you want to register as fighter, *inghimasi* or suicide bomber?
7. Translator Note: *inghimasi* means someone that enters battle where he most likely won't survive
8. I said I want *inghimasi*, but of course suicide bombings are the root of Jihad. But I wanted *inghimasi*.
9. So I stayed in “guest house 10” I stayed for some days waiting for the training camp, after some days they took me to a frontline...

Source:

الانغماسيون في اليمن قنابل بشرية ذكية من إنتاج القاعدة
Miftah al-Zawba. “*inghimasi*in in Yemen: a human smart bomb produced by al-Qaeda,” [barakish.net](http://www.barakish.net/news02.aspx?cat=0&sub=0&id=58443). 6 November 2013. <http://www.barakish.net/news02.aspx?cat=0&sub=0&id=58443>

... someone who follows al-Qaeda told me that the *inghimasi*in are the new recruits (he did not specify whether they were soldiers or merely gunmen). He added that the fighters had to wear military uniform to be considered *inghimasi*in by al-Qaeda. Are these *inghimasi*in soldiers who were recruited?...

(continued)

Continued: The Islamic State's Suicide Fighters

Although the term is associated with the conflict in Iraq and Syria and the IS in particular, it has also received attention in Yemen, as illustrated by the accompanying November 2013 article from the Yemeni press. Interestingly, this article emphasizes the subversive aspects of infiltrating enemy lines, specifically by donning the enemy's uniform.

The IS's major victories in Syria have generally involved a swarm of suicide fighters, one or more vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED), and heavy gunfire from several different directions. Roughly speaking, this is how the IS took over three Syrian Army bases in Raqqa Province in the second half of 2014, as the fourth accompanying excerpt notes. The IS has also used this tactic, thus far unsuccessfully, in its attempts to take over Syrian military positions in Dayr az Zawr.

*So long as it is able to continue recruiting, the IS is likely to continue relying on suicide fighters both for its military offensives and its attacks against soft targets. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

Source: Awad Mustafa. "Islamic State Relying More on Suicide Squads," DefenseNews. 27 August 2014. <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20140827/DEFREG04/308270020/Islamic-State-Relying-More-Suicide-Squads>

Hassan said the Inghimasy suicide team gets into close-quarter positions on the front lines. "If they succeed they move from one area to another. If they fail to break through, they blow themselves up and their opposition, creating holes in the enemy lines." Syrian government forces could not afford to send support to the base because of the continuous flow of the Inghimasy fighters, as that would drain their already stretched resources.

*The corinthia hotel, site of an "inghimasi attack" by the islamic state's "tripoli province".
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/>*



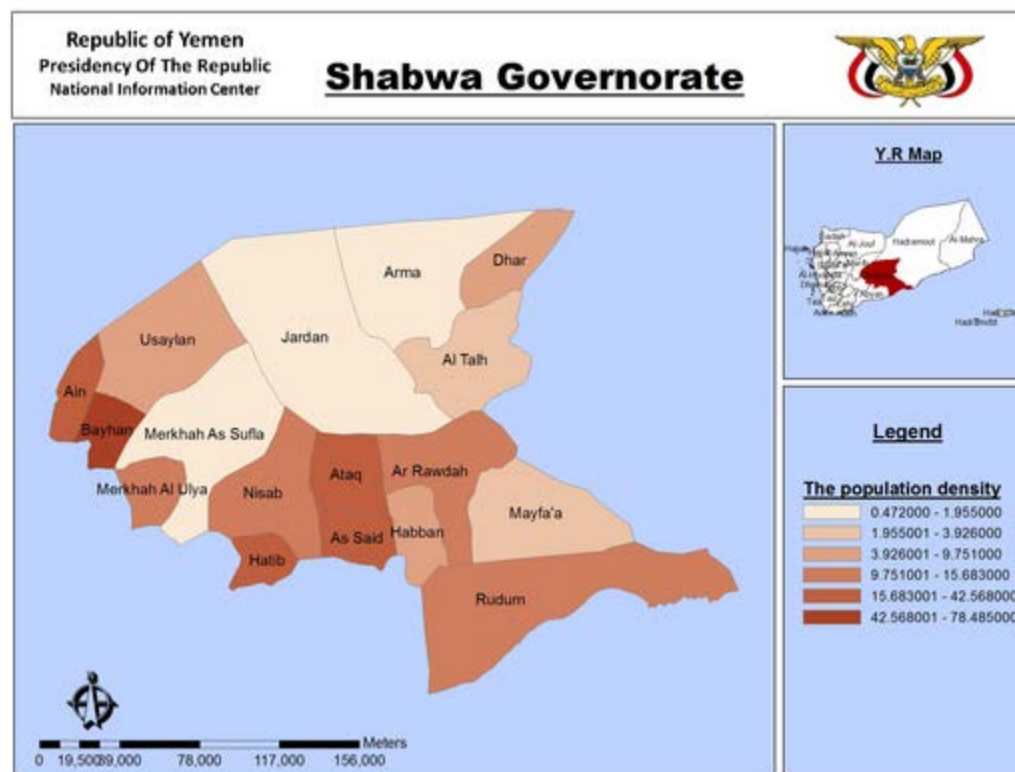
“... tribal fighters were in control of the 2d Mountain Infantry Brigade in the areas of Mayfa'a and Jul Rida. ...”

OE Watch Commentary: In November 2014 a group of Yemeni jihadis joined the Islamic State (IS). Unlike IS franchises in other countries, the Yemeni group was extremely nebulous. Its first significant action did not come until March 2015, when it killed over 100 prayer-goers and injured over 300 more in blasts at two mosques in the Yemeni capital. The perpetrators of the attacks identified themselves as militants from the IS's "Sana'a Province."

In the second half of April Sana'a Province issued its first video production. As with other IS productions, it is filmed in high resolution, uses several camera angles, and makes heavy use of the flashy transitions, filters and effects that are bundled with most video-editing software. The first half shows around twenty men in military uniform discharging their weapons and conducting choreographed military attack maneuvers, while the second allows a few of them to spout the standard tropes of sectarian hatred and incitement that have come to characterize the organization.

On 28 April, three days after the Sana'a Province video went online, IS militants from Shabwa Province released their own video showing the beheading and shooting of several captives who identify themselves as soldiers from the Yemeni Army's 2nd Mountain Infantry Brigade. This brigade, as the first accompanying article explains, is a relatively new formation that remains loyal to deposed President Ali Abdullah Saleh. In February 2014 it was moved from Lawdar, an AQAP hotbed in Abyan Province, to the southeast of Shabwa Province, from where it was to help guard the Balhaf liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal, one of Yemen's largest and most lucrative industrial operations.

In early April 2015 Huthi fighters entered Ataq, the provincial capital of Shabwa. Fighting ensued in several parts of the province, including areas near the Balhaf LNG plant. On 12 April 2015, two weeks before the IS beheading video was released, anti-Huthi "popular committee" (aka "popular resistance") fighters captured several positions linked to the 2nd Mountain Infantry Brigade,



Map source Yemeni National Information Center.

Source:

عدن الغد يكشف اسباب إخلاء شركة الغاز موقع بالحاف
 “Aden al-Ghad explains why the LNG plant in Balhaf was evacuated,” Aden al-Ghad, 6 April 2015. <http://adenalghad.net/news/157646>

The 2d Mountain Infantry Brigade, known for its absolute loyalty to former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, was formed just before the Taghir Square popular revolt in northern Yemen. It was created by a presidential decree which also appointed Saleh's son Khaled as its commander. During the military reorganization by the consensus President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, the brigade was transferred to Lawdar District and subsequently to Shabwa Province. The brigade's headquarters are in the [port] area of al-Namshiya and its various battalions are deployed in Azzan and al-Khorma, near the town of al-Houta, where authorities believe a large number of al-Qaeda militants are based.

Source:

رجال قبائل يسيطرون على اللواء الثاني مشاه جبلي في شبوة وغارات على مواقع عسكرية
 “Tribal fighters control the 2d Mountain Infantry Brigade in Shabwa...” al-Masdar, 13 April 2015. <http://almasdaronline.com/article/70738>

On Monday, local sources in the city of Atiq, located in Shabwa province to the east of the country, said that tribal fighters were in control of the 2d Mountain Infantry Brigade in the areas of Mayfa'a and Jul Rida.

(continued)

Continued: Yemen: The Islamic State in Shabwa

as noted in the second accompanying news report. Yemeni media noted that during the clashes several soldiers - in all likelihood those from the video - had been captured and beheaded. Two days later, the Balhaf LNG plant ceased all production, as reported in the third accompanying excerpt.

*Can a semblance of order be kept in Shabwa? As the fourth excerpt notes, Provincial Governor Ahmed Ali Bahaj, an ally of Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi and supporter of Saudi military intervention, is seeking to do so, while at the same time taking on the Huthi-Saleh alliance. This is a tall order indeed, especially given that the “popular resistance” forces he intends to rely on may well have cancerous IS cells ready to metastasize. **End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)***

Source: “Yemen LNG declares force majeure, halts all production over worsening security,” Reuters, 14 April 2015. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/14/idUSL4N0XB1IJ20150414>

“Due to further degradation of the security situation in the vicinity of Balhaf, Yemen LNG has decided to stop all LNG producing and exporting operations and start evacuation of the site personnel,” the company said in a statement on its website.

Source:

محافظ شبوة يوجه قائد اللواء الثاني مشاه جبلي باستيعاب اللجان الشعبية ضمن القوة العسكرية اللواء

“Shabwa governor directs the commander of the 2d Mountain Infantry Brigade to incorporate the popular committees,” al-Mashhad al-Yemeni, 2 May 2015. <http://almashhad-alyemeni.com/news51925.html>

The governor met with several notables and tribal leaders in the coastal parts of Shabwa (Mayfa’a, Rudum, al-Rawdah, Habban) and listened to their concerns. He also inspected the popular committees, who paraded some of the military equipment and weapons that had been seized and were ready to be used in the fight to expel the invading Huthi and Saleh forces... Shabwa Governor Ahmed Ali Bahaj was the first governor to announce his support for President Abd Rabbo Masnour Hadi and support his legitimacy after Hadi left Sanaa for Aden...

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

By Lucas Winter, Foreign Military Studies Office

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

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

Liberia: The Link Between Good Governance and Overcoming Ebola

13 May 2015

“But Liberia’s experience shows us that medical emergencies are also governance crises - and can only be solved by good healthcare and even better governance.”

OE Watch Commentary: The 2013 Ebola outbreak, which began in Guinea and spread to several other West African nations, took a devastating toll on the people of the region. However, as the accompanying article relates, on 9 May 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Liberia to be free of the disease, having had no new cases in the prior 42 days. It is a remarkable achievement and one of particular interest because Guinea and Sierra Leone, while making progress, still have not fully contained the outbreak. Indeed, in the week before Liberia was declared to have eradicated Ebola within its borders Guinea and Sierra Leone each reported nine new cases of the disease.

Why has Liberia been declared Ebola free whereas its neighbors still have new cases? The WHO lists four points which the accompanying article analyzes. First, Liberia’s president, Sirleaf Johnson, early on recognized the potential threat Ebola posed and made responding to it a national priority. Second, there was effective community engagement to help monitor the disease as well as respond appropriately. Third, the international response provided great assistance, including more to Liberia than the other countries, and fourth, regarding that international response, it was fairly effectively coordinated with the nation’s response, creating a synergistic effect.

For much of her performance during the epidemic President Sirleaf garnered praise. However, this is not to say everything was problem free; as the article relates, the country’s response was far from perfect. In particular, as noted in previous OEW commentaries, the military was accused of excessive force in trying to implement quarantines. Still, Liberia overall seems to have managed some aspects of the epidemic better than its neighbors who, according to the article, struggle with institutional obstacles, as exemplified in Sierra Leone, where custom regulations kept needed medical supplies languishing in warehouses. Therefore, despite



Source: Simon Allison, “West Africa: Think Again - Why Did Liberia Beat Ebola Before Guinea or Sierra Leone?” Institute for Security Studies (South Africa), 13 May 2015, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201505141065.html>

‘Interruption of transmission is a monumental achievement for a country that reported the highest number of deaths in the largest, longest and most complex outbreak since Ebola first emerged in 1976. ...’

...the damage caused to Liberia’s economy, which slowed dramatically during the outbreak and shows no signs of recovering anytime soon; and the devastation caused to an already-weak public health system.

As Liberia begins to contemplate its difficult post-Ebola future, Guinea and neighboring Sierra Leone are still in the midst of the epidemic. ...

This begs the question: what did Liberia do differently? Why is Liberia - once the hardest hit - now Ebola-free, while Guinea and Sierra Leone are still struggling?

(continued)

Continued: Liberia: The Link Between Good Governance and Overcoming Ebola

some significant mistakes, to its credit, Liberia, a country still scarred from its civil wars, whose public health system was hampered by a lack of resources even before the epidemic, managed to eventually find its footing and mount an effective response to the disease.

*While there is relief that the country has been declared Ebola free, the celebratory mood is muted by the realization the disease, still present in neighboring countries, could readily return if strong vigilance is not maintained. Additionally, while the epidemic roared the economy sank, and is still far from fully recovering from the loss of life and interruption to business the outbreak wrought. However, though they came at a tremendous cost, there were some lessons learned from this experience, with perhaps the most important being how critical good governance is to controlling epidemics. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

It is telling, however, that the WHO reserves some of its highest praise for Sirleaf. ‘Her swift and sometimes tough decisions, frequent public communications, and presence at outbreak sites were expressions of this leadership,’ it said.

On the other hand, poor governance facilitates transmission. In Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the response to Ebola was initially hampered by an official reluctance to acknowledge the problem; entirely inadequate medical resources to deal with it; and by a fundamental lack of trust between citizens and governments which meant, all too often, that sound government advice fell on deaf ears. These are failures of governance, for which each country has paid dearly.

Liberia’s government, however, was the first to take Ebola seriously and mobilize accordingly. While its response was far from perfect, it was quicker and more efficient than that of its counterparts in Guinea or Sierra Leone.

‘The Liberian government was transparent about Ebola from the beginning and accepted its limitations on how to handle the outbreak... There were also more institutional obstacles and denial in the two other countries at the beginning of the outbreak, but both countries will eventually get to zero cases if the response system remains focused,’ said Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in a set of discussion points distributed to staff.

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

By Lieutenant Colonel Robert Feldman, U.S. Army Reserve (ret).

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

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



The African Standby Force and its Unsolved Problems

16 May 2015

“We should be cautious of being over dependent on foreign assistance in resolving our problems. The intended operationalization of the African Standby Force will be a positive development in maintaining peace and also minimize involvement of foreigners.”

OE Watch Commentary: African defense ministers met in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, in mid-May in the 8th Ordinary Meeting of African Union Ministers of Defense to discuss the progress towards the standup of the African Standby Force (ASF); they concluded that well known problems continued to plague it. The platform for the ASF was created in 2002 with the creation of the African Union, which, in transitioning from the Organization of African Unity, created a wide-ranging military and security governance framework called the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Though other institutions within APSA, such as the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, and the African Peace Fund, among others, offered hope for the abatement of continental conflicts, the core of the project was to be the ASF.

In short, the ASF is intended to be a rapid deployment force composed of 5,000 troops drawn from each of five African regions, ready to deploy under the aegis of the African Union's Peace and Security Council in the event of "grave circumstances" as per Article 4(h) of the African Union's Constitutive Act. Yet, though some regions' brigades are theoretically deployment-ready - particularly West Africa (the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF)), Southern Africa (SADC Standby Force (SSF)), and East Africa (East African Standby Force (EASF)) - those in Central Africa (the Force Multinationale d'Afrique Centrale (FOMAC) and especially Northern Africa (North African Regional Capability) are far from deployment capable. To that end, the official inauguration of the ASF has been delayed three times, and, according to an internal report released by the African Union in 2014, is very unlikely to be able to meet its 2015 deadline.

As discussed in the recent meeting in Zimbabwe, several issues continue to plague the ASF's standup. Three are discussed here. The first that is commonly cited is the lack of political will from member states. At least one reason for this is - as the first article relays - the perception that the ASF might potentially

Source: Sanchez, Dana. 2015. "Will Proposed African Standby Military Force Meet 2015 Deadline?" AFKInsider. May 13. <http://afkinsider.com/96204/will-proposed-african-standby-military-force-meet-2015-deadline/>

African defense ministers met in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, to assess the progress of the African standby military force that many hope will end the need for controversial Western military interventions in Africa, according to a SABCNews video.

...But the standby force has its critics who say it could become a tool for stronger African countries to intervene in weaker ones without themselves being subject to its authority, SABC reports.

One of the problems delaying the process has been lack of consensus on who exactly should deploy the standby force — the African union or the United Nations — according to the Institute for Security Studies.

...The African Union Commission is planning to conduct a field training exercise in South Africa in October or November 2015 as part of an ongoing training cycle known as AMANI AFRICA II. The goal of the training is to develop the African standby force and make it fully operational by the end of 2015, the African Union says.

Source: Staff. 2015. "Africa: AU Needs U.S \$1 Billion for Continental Defence Force," New Zimbabwe. May 14. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201505141057.html>.

The African Union needs about \$1 billion to finance a unified continental standby force to be used in times of conflict in any of the member states.

...AU defence, safety and security experts are meeting in Victoria Falls to review the progress made so far in the operationalization of the force.

...Bam said the biggest challenge was financing the force adding that they would depend on development partners for funding for food, equipment, upkeep and other essentials.

Delays in establishing a standby force has resulted in Africa relying on military intervention from the former colonisers through the United Nations. This has been the case in conflict areas such as Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR) two years ago.

(continued)

Continued: The African Standby Force and its Unsolved Problems

legitimate larger states' interventions into smaller neighboring states under the pretext of humanitarianism or pre-emptive stability operations. A second stumbling block relates to the first: the African Union, as the second article details, is grossly underfunded; thus, the vast majority of the African Union's budget for peace and security (around 97%) comes from external funders, primarily the European Union via its African Peace Facility. Moreover, the lack of African airlift capacity and the requisite air support infrastructure has also been an area in which Western assistance frequently fills in local gaps. Though, as detailed by the third article, one enduring theme at the conference was the need to move away from such support by Western militaries, which some believe are actually exacerbating the threats of terrorism due to perceived collusion with the West.

*As the first article relays, a third issue relates to the responsibility of mandating approval between the African Union and the ASF. In essence, international organizations like the African Union, by virtue of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, are supposed to get UN approval prior to deploying intervention forces in the service of the protection of international peace and security. Yet, in practice, given the length of time to reach consensus in the UN and the gravity of many conflict situations on the continent, the African Union has needed to deploy troops without UN approval, instead seeking it in the aftermath of deployment, at which point missions are typically handed over to the UN. In short, while the ASF is a much-needed institution, it must resolve numerous challenges before deployment capabilities are realistic. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

Source: Staff. 2015. "Africa: AU Blames Terrorism On Foreign Military Interventions." New Zimbabwe. May 16 2015. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201505170041.html>.

The African Union (AU) has said it is concerned about increase in terrorist activities in the continent blaming such crises on foreign military intervention.

The continental body feels a home grown military force would end instability and ensure peace prevails by "closing out" western powers' interference under the guise of military help.

Speaking at the close of the 8th ordinary meeting of the AU Ministers of Defence in Victoria Falls on Friday, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui called on member states to desist from reliance on foreign military intervention.

...He added: "While it is important to address some of the contributing factors such as poverty and lack of opportunities in our continent, we should urgently mobilise the necessary intelligence to effectively fight terrorism and to address the conditions that give rise to radicalisation and extremism."

...He appealed to member states to be cautious of foreign military help in resolving problems.

"This meeting comes at a time when there is rising insecurity and terrorism in our continent. This is the time for us to combine efforts and be guided by principles of our founding fathers as well as the need to safeguard the fundamental freedoms of future generations.

"We should be cautious of being over dependent on foreign assistance in resolving our problems. The intended operationalization of the ASF will be a positive development in maintaining peace and also minimize involvement of foreigners," Dr Sekeramayi.

Chad: Nigerian Willingness to Cooperate a Stumbling Block in Fighting Boko Haram

“[Nigeria] is not undertaking joint operations. If they were operating joint operations, probably they would have achieved more results,” he said.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The fight against Boko Haram rages on, and though as of 2015 it has taken on a new multidimensional character, coalition member states, especially Chad, have begun to highlight the difficulties in working with Nigerian forces, who appear reluctant to genuinely work with others.*

As observers will recall, Nigeria has historically been reluctant to engage outside forces - either from West Africa, the African Union, or the West - in its fight against Boko Harm. However, this all changed in January 2015 at the semi-annual African Union summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, when Nigeria agreed to deepen cooperation with members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), which comprises Niger, Chad, and Cameroon in addition to Algeria, Libya, CAR, and Sudan. Yet, since Nigeria has agreed to deepen its engagement with neighbors under the auspices of the LCBC, partners have emphasized the difficulty in working with Nigeria.

As detailed in the article below, one vocal dissident of the Nigerian modus operandi has been Chadian President Idriss Deby, who recently detailed the numerous issues that Chad has faced in its military cooperation with Nigeria. Though he described the issue broadly as a lack of synergy between the militaries, some specific lessons in Nigeria’s engagement (or lack thereof) with Chad are seemingly indicative of its larger issues in relation to the fight against Boko Haram. One issue is the lack of actual collaboration: Chad claims that the “collaboration” is only nominal, and that each army actually works independently in the field. As Deby relayed, “They [Nigerians] are not undertaking joint operations. If they were operating joint operations, probably they would have achieved more results.” Moreover, Chadians have emphasized the Nigerian tendency to downplay the threat of Boko Haram, as well as the regional problems caused by Nigeria’s inability to police its own borders.

*Yet, given that Nigerian administrations have just changed hands from incumbent Goodluck Jonathan to president-elect General Muhammadu Buhari, real changes in Nigerian cooperation strategies might be forthcoming. What is clear, however, is that Nigeria’s historic tendencies to avoid deep collaboration on military and security affairs are apparently difficult to dismantle. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

Source: Oladeji, Abdullahi Umar Bayo. 2015. “West Africa: Why We Can’t Capture Shekau - Chadian President.” Leadership (Abuja). http://allafrica.com/stories/201505120099.html?aa_source=nwsltr-conflict-en.

Chadian President Idriss Deby has said that lack of synergy between Nigerian military and its Chadian counterpart is responsible for the continued disappearance of wanted Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau, Hausa service of the BBC has reported.

Deby, who stated this after a closed door meeting with President Goodluck Jonathan in Abuja yesterday, said it was regrettable that the two armies, those of Nigeria and Chadian, are working separately in the field, adding that the war against Boko Haram had not yet been totally won because Chad and Nigeria were not working together.

“They are not undertaking joint operations. If they were operating joint operations, probably they would have achieved more results,” he said.

Deby had, sometime in March, accused Nigeria of downplaying the threat of Boko Haram and failing to cooperate with the regional coalition battling the jihadists, saying there had been zero contact between the armies involved.

The republics of Chad, Cameroon and Niger joined forces since January to battle Boko Haram, whose insurgency has claimed over 12,000 lives since 2009.

The Chadian president at the time said he was baffled by the Nigerian government’s lack of cooperation in the offensive.

“Two months after the start of this war, we have not had any direct contact with the Nigerian Army units on the ground,” he had told a French weekly.

Deby, who earlier this year was quoted as saying he knew the whereabouts of Abubakar Shekau, has backtracked on his claim, insisting on keeping any possible knowledge of the location of the terrorist to himself.

“I cannot tell you today that I know where Shekau is hiding and even if I knew I won’t tell you,” Deby told journalists.

In his response to journalists yesterday, the Chadian president said it was important for him to come to discuss with his Nigerian counterpart as he leaves office to review “what we did together, what we achieved together in the fight against Boko Haram”.

He further stated that Boko Haram had not been completely eradicated, but only weakened.

“The military authorities have been told to begin planning for how to earn and sustain credibility with the public as the war against terrorism gradually comes to an end.”

OE Watch Commentary: Goodluck is out, and Buhari is in. With the win of General Muhammadu Buhari in Nigeria's March 2015 elections - the first time an incumbent has been ousted in Nigeria, and peacefully no less - Nigerians and the broader international community are waiting with anticipation to see what changes, if any, the embattled Nigerian military might expect. Thus far, indications point to a wide range of potential improvements.

Goodluck Jonathan, who entered office in 2010 as then-president Yar'adua fell ill, has borne the brunt of Boko Haram's carnage. While in power, one of the primary critiques of his administration had been its poor handling of the Boko Haram insurgency. Among others, Jonathan has been accused of not fundamentally tackling the underlying issues that gave rise to the insurgency (especially poverty and youth unemployment) in the northern states of Yobe, Adamawa, and Borno; downplaying the threats posed by the insurgency to Nigerians, neighbors, and the global community; politicizing national security in his failed bid for reelection; and generally presiding over a military apparatus notorious for its human rights abuses, while simultaneously unable to effectively deal with the insurgency. Thus, Buhari - a former General and a popular figure in the north - ran his campaign, at least partially, on a platform that espoused his capability to better handle the insurgency than the then-incumbent president.

How likely to yield results are Buhari's promises to reform an embattled Nigerian military? While the answer remains unclear, his early pre-incumbency rhetoric seems to suggest that changes might be real. As detailed in the article below, Buhari has already put the military on alert for likely changes that suggest a professionalization of the military and a commitment to improving its relationship with average Nigerian citizens, especially those in the north. Among others, his proposed changes include working to increase recruitment and professionalization practices within the military; improving northern citizens' perceptions of the

Source: Oladeji, Abdullahi Umar Bayo. 2015. "West Africa: Why We Can't Capture Shekau - Chadian President." Leadership (Abuja). http://allafrica.com/stories/201505120099.html?aa_source=nwsltr-conflict-en.

...The military authorities have been told to begin planning for how to earn and sustain credibility with the public as the war against terrorism gradually comes to an end.

This call was made by a panel set up to draft a new defence policy for the country with a view to making it relevant and responsive to present challenges. To do otherwise is to risk being labelled "occupation forces" in communities where they serve, and this could constitute a credibility problem.

Presenting the draft defence policy yesterday to the minister of defence, Lt.-Gen. Aliyu Gusau; the chairman of the panel, Air Vice Marshal M.I. Muhammed Ndatsu Umaru (ret'd) listed some areas that need urgent attention.

He said the factors to be considered include, but not limited to, better readiness to protect the people no matter the cost, an all-encompassing professional education and training mechanism for all the services and a personnel recruitment system that accommodates only the best in the society.

According to him, due to lack of employment and the perceived good condition of service of the military, those seeking recruitment are attracted to the military even without the zeal to serve, adding that a professional military is key to national security and the pride of any democracy.

He argued that how the armed forces is managed also matters, as the committee observed that the issue of a big bureaucracy or civil service for supporting the armed forces without the understanding of military ethos is a big challenge under the prevailing conditions.

Speaking further, the chairman said civilian staff supporting the military must be well trained and familiar with appropriate military traditions and the imperatives of their employment.

AVM Umaru lamented that, for now, the nation had a huge gap to fill and recommended that the Ministry of Defence be reorganized in a professional manner that promotes a more collaborative working relationship between civilian and military professionals.

Also, he noted that the review of the national defence policy should be seen as a process that must be conducted periodically in line with changing security situation; hence the policy should be reviewed every five years.

The new draft defence policy also proposes that the military personnel in performance of their duties must be guided by policy, a product of politics; hence they must be aware of their ultimate responsibility to a political leader.

(continued)

Continued: Buhari and the Nigerian Military: Changes to Come?

*legitimacy of the Nigerian military; improving civilian employees' understanding of their role within the military; and, perhaps most importantly, his creation of a panel to review Nigeria's national defense policy, which has not been updated since 2006, years before Boko Haram had materialized. Whether these changes will actually be forthcoming - and more importantly, if they will have an impact on the ground - is yet to be seen. **End OE Watch Commentary (Warner)***

This expected ideal situation, the policy says, requires that the political leaders do not drag the military into politics as the dynamics of democratic control of the military is domiciled in the centres of power, Aso Villa and Ship House (Defence Headquarters).

Confronting Africa's Sobels (Soldiers by Day, Rebels by Night)

By FMSO analyst Robert Feldman and noted geographer Michel Ben Arrous

While the sobel phenomenon (soldiers by day; rebels by night) described within these pages may appear to be an African problem, the Western world's increasing involvement in fighting terrorists on that continent make it one America's military forces might encounter. Unfortunately, it could add a significant layer of complexity to US operations as American troops attempt to differentiate allies from enemies. In Africa, sometimes they are one and the same.

Parameters Winter 2013-2014

http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/issues/Winter_2013/7_FeldmanArrous.pdf



Fighting Irregular Fighters

Sibylle Scheipers

Robert J. Bunker

Robert L. Feldman and Michel Ben Arrous

“*Rapporteurs believe that development aid from France in sub-Saharan Africa is both insufficient and inefficient, leading to crises, the collapse of states, and then the intervention of the French army.*”

OE Watch Commentary: France is the former colonial power of much of West Africa and a country that now exercises power, mostly through military means, in the region. Recognizing shifting regional trends, France is now reconsidering ways to maintain influence there. An article on L'obs Monde on 8 May discussed a report in France that suggests that its military-based strategy in West Africa is no longer working effectively. Rather, the report suggests that it needs to focus more on effective development initiatives and good governance, or else it will be mired in a cycle of interventions followed by renewed insurgencies followed by more interventions.

One of the issues that the report emphasizes is the growing cost of military interventions for France. There are now not only lingering civil wars in Mali, but also crises resulting from the influence of the Islamic State in countries such as Libya, Tunisia, and Nigeria, which surround the Francophone region in West Africa. Moreover, one of the most peaceful countries, Burkina Faso, experienced political unrest within the past year, as well as the first terror attacks on its territory. On 19 May, in a statement pledging allegiance to the Islamic State, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) also claimed the kidnapping of a Romanian citizen in Burkina Faso in April 2015.

France has some key advantages for engaging West African countries in development programs. Most West African countries use French as their working language and have educational and other historical ties to France. Yet, France at the same time will likely seek to join forces with other friendly governments and international organizations to implement development programs for the purpose of promoting security, since France alone does not have the funds to support development initiatives in all West African states, let alone combat health crises such as Ebola. While this new plan may require France to withdraw slightly from its position of holding a preeminence of influence in West Africa, according to the article it will be a necessary step to preserve French influence and, perhaps of greater urgency, prevent the expansion of Islamic State influence. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Source: Over-Militarized and Without a Vision: The French Policy in Africa is Breaking Down (Surmilitarisée et sans vision: la politique française en Afrique éreintée) L'obs Monde.com, 8 May 2015.

Over-Militarized and Without a Vision: The French Policy in Africa is Breaking Down (Surmilitarisée et sans vision: la politique française en Afrique éreintée)

After a year of work and many hearings, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly is about to publish a report lambasting the very policy of France in Africa. The report is so virulent that the socialist president of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Elisabeth Guigou, was keen to distance herself from it publicly.

These are the basic criticisms of French actions that have raised the heat. To summarize, the rapporteurs believe that development aid from France in sub-Saharan Africa is both insufficient and inefficient, leading to crises, the collapse of states, and then the intervention of the French army.

Philip Baumel, a report writer, explains that even if it is necessary, [France] can not be satisfied with military intervention which, furthermore, cost last year nearly one billion euros.

Take the case of Mali. France has poured hundreds of millions of euros on this country since decolonization, and the State collapsed in 15 days, calling [France] for help. Yet the neglect continues: it seems that the top priority of the new authorities was to buy a presidential plane.

OE Watch Commentary: Since Turkish President Erdoğan's visit with the new King of Saudi Arabia in March 2015, relations between the two Sunni powers appear to have improved significantly. Not only has Turkey declared its support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, but it appears, based on recent Turkish open sources, that the two sides may also be cooperating in Syria.

As the first accompanying passage from the Turkish press points out, Turkey is trying to achieve its goal of removing Assad in Syria by "attaching" itself to Saudi Arabia. The second passage notes that the rapprochement between the two sides was brokered by Qatar and quotes an Independent article which claims that Erdoğan told Saudi officials that the inaction of the West in Syria, in particular their refusal to declare a no-fly zone, means that the regional powers should come together and take the lead in supporting the opposition there.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey-- both Sunni powers-- had been on opposing sides on the issue of the removal of the Muslim-Brotherhood-led government in Egypt: Saudi Arabia supported the removal while Turkey condemned it. After the death of King Abdullah and the subsequent new Saudi leadership under King Salman, this issue appears to have been put aside in light of other threats. Salman, focused on curbing Iran's ambitions in the region and the developments in Syria, appears open to working with Turkey within a Sunni alliance against the Assad regime.

The third accompanying passage discusses in detail why Turkey has put its difference with Saudi Arabia on the issue of Egypt aside. It claims that Turkey's isolation in the region, its inability to affect the developments in Syria in the way it would like, its desire to curb the growing Iranian influence in the region, and its desire to improve its relations with Gulf countries are what has led to this development.

Erdoğan had met with Salman in March 2015 in Riyadh. Subsequently, in late March, Erdoğan declared his support for a Saudi-led military operation in Yemen targeting Houthi rebels. This had prompted criticism from analysts in Turkey that it is wrong for Turkey to enter a sectarian-based fight. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

Source: Soli Özel, "Obama ve Körfez Arapları" (Obama and the Gulf Arabs), Haberturk.com.tr, 15 May 2015, <http://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/soli-ozel/1078627-obama-ve-korfez-araplari>

"... By attaching [itself] to Saudi Arabia's tail, Turkey wants to achieve the goal of removing Assad, which it hasn't been able to accomplish on its own..."

Source: Cengiz Çandar, "Türkiye ile Suudi Arabistan'ın 'Suriye evliliği'" (Turkey and Saudi Arabia's 'Syria marriage'), Radikal.com.tr, 16 May 2015, http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/cengiz_candar/turkiye_ile_sarabistanin_suriye_evliliği-1358723

"On the issue of Syria, Qatar has brokered the rapprochement between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, which is opposed to Iran, has established a 'regional Sunni axis' with Turkey in Syria, which is divergent from the U.S.'s approach."

"[An article in The Independent claims that] the new relationship between Turkey and Saudi Arabia started in early March with Erdoğan's visit with King Salman in Riyadh and says, 'Erdoğan told the Saudi officials that the inaction of the West in Syria, in particular their refusal to declare a no-fly zone, means that the regional powers should come together and take the lead in supporting the opposition.'"

Source: Gönül Tol, "Suudi-Türkiye yakınlaşması dengeleri değiştirir mi?" (Will the Saudi-Turkey rapprochement change the balances [in the region]?), Radikal.com.tr, 18 March 2015, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/radikal.aspx?atype=haberyazdir&articleid=1315722>

"What happened that the two sides decided to put aside their differences on Egypt after all that tension and to cooperate?"

It is not hard to understand the situation from Turkey's perspective.

It is not a secret that Turkey has become isolated in the region, and that it has become even more alienated due to its stance on the Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt.

It is also clear that Ankara is uncomfortable with Iran's increasing influence in the region, especially in Iraq.

Other factors that have decreased Turkey's area of maneuver is its inability to change the balances in Syria the way it wants, and the U.S.'s Syria policy.

In such an environment, Turkey is hoping to get its relations with Saudi Arabia back on track in order to break its isolation in the region; become a leading actor in the region on many issues ranging from the Israel-Palestine issue to the ISIS issue; improve its declining relations with the Gulf countries; find support for its Syria policy; and limit Iran's influence in the region."

“...Greece’s primary security threats stem from Turkish revisionism in the Aegean Sea and in Cyprus and from Turkey’s broader aspirations for a hegemonic position in the Near East. Greek foreign policy has been defined by regional competition with Turkey.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 19 February Commander of the Turkish Air Forces General Akın Öztürk led a group of eight Turkish warplanes in a low-altitude flight over the Aegean Sea. As the accompanying passages by Greek and Turkish sources point out, each side interpreted this very differently. Subsequently, in early March Turkey issued a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) to reserve a large area of airspace over the Aegean in the coming months, for military exercises (the notice was later canceled). These two developments have increased tensions between Turkey and Greece. The accompanying passages point out their respective perspectives on each other.

The first passage, by a Greek analyst, points out that Turkey’s decision to unilaterally issue a NOTAM reserving extensive airspace over the Aegean Sea from 2 March-31 December for military use is considered a serious provocation. The second passage, by two Greek experts, noted the developments as being “Turkish provocations in the Aegean taking the form of incursions into Greek airspace.” The authors state that Greece’s primary security threats stem from Turkish revisionism in the Aegean Sea and in Cyprus and from Turkey’s broader aspirations for a hegemonic position in the Near East. They point out that Greek foreign policy has been defined by regional competition with Turkey.

The third passage, from a Turkish source, claims that the Turkish Air Forces general’s decision to lead a group of eight Turkish warplanes in a low-altitude flight over the Aegean was in response to Greek Defense Minister Panos Kammenos’s 30 January military helicopter visit to the disputed Aegean islet of Kardak (Imia), which the passage describes as “Greek belligerence.”

Over the last two decades governments in Greece believed that Turkey’s desire to join the European Union (EU) would force it to pursue normalization with Greece. However, as the two Greek authors point out, Turkey no longer appears to be interested in joining the EU, and therefore is not constrained by this pursuit, enabling it to follow more aggressive policies in the Aegean.

Source: “Greece to Respond to Unprecedented Turkish Provocation in Aegean,” Tovima.gr, 2 March 2015, <http://www.tovima.gr/en/article/?aid=681592>

“Turkey’s decision to unilaterally issue a Notice to Airmen (“NOTAM”), reserving an extensive airspace over the Aegean Sea from the 2nd of March to 31st of December for military use is considered a serious provocation, with the Greek government prepared to take the matter to NATO, the United Nations, the European Union and the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO)... This is the second major Turkish provocation in the Aegean in the past two months. On the 31st of December 2014, Turkey issued two NAVTEX broadcasts, reserving large areas in the north and central Aegean for 2015.”

Source: Nicholas Sambanis and Ioannis Galariotis, “Is GREXIT a Threat to Greece’s Security?” Washington Post, 3 May 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/03/is-grexit-a-threat-to-greeces-security/>

“During an intense period of Euro group negotiations over Greek debt in early March, Turkish provocations in the Aegean taking the form of incursions into Greek airspace reminded the Greek public that the Near East could be an unfriendly place.”

“...Greece’s primary security threats stem from Turkish revisionism in the Aegean Sea and in Cyprus and from Turkey’s broader aspirations for a hegemonic position in the Near East. Greek foreign policy has been defined by regional competition with Turkey.”

“Greece and Turkey have over time developed identities that are mutually hostile. There has been a gradual improvement of relations since the last militarized dispute over the Imia islands, in the 1990’s, but...both Athens and Ankara view each other as a threat.”

“The strict framework of conditionality (for joining the European Union), established by the Helsinki European Council in 1999 regarding Turkey’s EU candidacy no longer shapes Turkey’s security priorities in the Aegean conflict or in Cyprus- the two primary areas of focus in Greek-Turkish relations...Turkey is less constrained in the pursuit of these policies by a withering desire to be in Europe.”

(continued)

Continued: Tensions in Turkish-Greek Relations over the Aegean

As the final passage from the website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs states, the fundamentals of the Aegean dispute between the two NATO allies are the delimitation of the continental shelf, territorial waters, air space, flight information regions and the militarized status of the Greek islands near the Turkish coast. End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)

Source: “Turkish Government Slammed for Turning Blind Eye to Greek Seizure of Aegean Islands,” Today’s Zaman, 2 April 2015, http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_turkish-govt-slammed-for-turning-blind-eye-to-greek-seizure-of-aegean-islands_376972.html

“Accompanied by top military staff, Greek Defense Minister Panos Kammenos visited the disputed Aegean islet of Kardak (İmıa) by military helicopter on Jan. 30. The Greek belligerence did not go unanswered and on February 19 the commander of the Turkish Air Forces, Gen. Akın Öztürk, personally led a group of eight Turkish warplanes in a low-altitude flight over the international waters near the Greek islands.”

Source: “Türkiye-Yunanistan İlişkileri” (Turkish-Greek Relations), Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Undated, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-yunanistan-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa>

“There are a number of problems between our country [Turkey] and Greece on issues in the Aegean and issues effecting our country’s basic rights and interests. These are: the limits of territorial waters, the determination of the continental shelf, the status of small islands and islets whose sovereignty have not been given to Greece via international agreements, the limits of air space, the issue of Flight Information Region (FIR) (a specified airspace in which a flight information service and alerting service are provided); and the weaponization of the Eastern Aegean islands contrary to international agreements.”

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

By Ms. Karen Kaya, Foreign Military Studies Office

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

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



Turkey and Russia Moving Forward on Strategic Energy Cooperation

12 May 2015

“The nature of [Turkey and Russia’s] bilateral relations can be conceptualized as the ‘compartmentalization’ of negative issues in order to focus on the positive aspects.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 7 May 2015 a leading official from Russian gas company Gazprom was in Ankara for talks with the Turkish energy minister. Following the talks, the Gazprom official declared that “Turkish Stream” – a gas pipeline that would carry Russian natural gas to Europe via the Black Sea and Turkey - would start operating in December 2016. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press discuss Turkish-Russian relations in light of this development, arguing that, despite differences on many issues, the two sides compartmentalize relations and focus on strategic interests.

As the first accompanying passage notes, the Turkish Stream project entails a gas pipeline that starts in Russia and reaches Thrace (the part of Turkish territory that is in Europe) and would have the capacity to carry 63 billion cubic meters of gas per year. The second passage points out that, despite recent glitches in Turkish-Russian relations, (including Putin’s support for the Armenian genocide, which Turkey rejects, and Erdoğan’s subsequent refusal to attend the Victory Day Parade in Moscow to mark the 70th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany), Turkish-Russian relations continue uninterrupted in the energy field. The two are also at odds over regional issues such as Ukraine, Crimea and Syria.

The third passage quotes a Turkish expert from an influential think-tank in Turkey, who claims that Turkish-Russian relations can be characterized as “compartmentalization” of negative issues in order to focus on the positive ones. She claims that this strategy enables bilateral economic and socio-political ties to flourish.

On 1 December 2014 the annual meeting of the High-Level Russian-Turkish Cooperation Council took place in Turkey. Despite fundamental disagreements between Ankara and Moscow on important regional issues, including Syria, Egypt, and Ukraine, Turkish President Erdoğan agreed to Putin’s proposal to drop plans for the South Stream energy project and to build an alternative undersea pipeline to Turkey. Thus, despite mounting tensions between Putin and the West, and despite Turkey being a member of NATO, Turkish-Russian relations continue based on realpolitik. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**



Turkish Stream route. Source: Gazprom

Source: “Türk Akımı’nda anlaşma” (Agreement on ‘Turkish Stream’), Milliyet.com.tr, 7 May 2015, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/turk-akimi-nda-anlasma/ekonomi/detay/2055611/default.htm>

“Gazprom and Turkey have agreed on Turkish Stream to start operating in December 2016. The project foresees Russia to carry natural gas from under the Black Sea to Turkey. The CEO of Russian energy giant Alexey Miller was in Ankara for the agreement. Russian president Vladimir Putin had come to Ankara last December and suggested cancelling the South Stream project in favor of Turkish Stream which would start in Russia and reach Thrace (the part of Turkish territory that is in Europe); consisting of a gas pipeline that would carry 63 billion cubic meters of gas per year.”

(continued)

Continued: Turkey and Russia Moving Forward on Strategic Energy Cooperation

Source: Semih Idiz, "Is Turkish Stream a Pipe Dream?" Al-Monitor.com, 12 May 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/05/turkish-stream-is-it-real-or-a-merely-a-pipe-dream.html>

"Turkish-Russia ties were strained in an unprecedented manner recently after President Vladimir Putin gave strong support to the widespread belief that the Armenian massacres during World War I were genocide, which Turkey officially rejects, and attended the commemorations in Yerevan to mark the centenary of the event.

Ankara responded angrily by listing Russian atrocities in Ukraine, Caucasus and Central Asia, while President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan turned down an invitation to attend the Victory Day Parade in Moscow to mark the 70th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Developments are, nevertheless, proving again that despite differences the two countries have on regional issues such as Ukraine, Crimea and Syria, and the angry remarks they may exchange over sensitive issues such as the Armenian question, it is business as usual in terms of economic cooperation, particularly in the strategic energy field."

Source: Semih Idiz, "Erdoğan's Delicate Balancing Act in Kiev," Al-Monitor.com, 24 March 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/turkey-russia-ukraine-balancing-act-kiev.html>

Habibe Özdal of the Turkish International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) indicates that the upward trend in ties between Ankara and Moscow, despite differences over Syria and Ukraine, is the result of 'compartmentalization'. ...The nature of [Turkey and Russia's] bilateral relations can be conceptualized as the 'compartmentalization' of negative issues in order to focus on the positive aspects. This strategy enables bilateral economic and socio-political ties to flourish, whilst also allowing Turkish-Russian relations to weather the storm over Ukraine with minimal damage."

The Militarization of **GAZPROM**

By Cindy Hurst, FMSO

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

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



OE Watch Commentary: *“Liberation Theology,” a 60s/70s phenomenon featuring the political activism of clergy, has an involved developmental narrative, that is, it did not spring full-blown from the head of God. The early history of the movement has itself been the subject of partisan ideological contention. Some prefer to believe and argue that it was birthed entirely via the minds and preaching of a small number of mostly Latin American clerical scholars. These religious men and women, they argue, felt the church (mostly Roman Catholic, but there were Protestant denominational roots as well) needed to engage more vigorously to improve the material wellbeing of the poor. Others assure that the movement was promoted and fueled, if not flatly invented, by the Soviets as a subversive project of its international front groups.*

The argument caught some currency this past month because of two events. In one, Pope Francis, known to have leftward political leanings, recently lifted Liberation Theology from its previous contemplational ostracism within the Roman Catholic Church, symbolically recognizing the life and work of 86-year old Notre Dame University professor and priest Gustavo Gutiérrez. Perhaps one of the founders of the movement, he is unarguably one of the early thinkers behind the philosophy. The other event involves the memoirs and revelations of 86-year-old General Ion Mihai Pacepa, a renowned Soviet-era spy and defector. While Pacepa does not claim that theology in Liberation Theology was created by the KGB, his arguments and recollections support the notion that, but for money, travel and other encouragements coming from Soviet front organizations, Liberation Theology might have had a much smaller footprint and maybe a different name.

*The debate will remain for many an historiographic footnote, but in much of Latin America it still provides fuel for Left-Right polarization. One of the seminal events in the early history of Liberation Theology was a conference in Medellín, Colombia in 1968 -- for Colombians the debate remains of considerable interest. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)***

Source: UAN VICENTE BOO, “Gustavo Gutiérrez, padre de la «teología de la liberación», recibido por la puerta grande en el Vaticano” (Gustavo Gutierrez, father of ‘liberation theology’, greeted as dignity at the Vatican), Informador Público, 15 May 2015, <http://www.informadorpublico.com/internacional/gustavo-gutierrez-padre-de-la-teologia-de-la-liberacion-recibido-por-la-puerta-grande-en-el-vaticano/>

“Gutiérrez himself reminded that the “theology of liberation” has always been respected as such by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith while, in turn, it has condemned the errors, at times very serious, of some members of that current...”

Source: Religión en Revolución, “‘Nosotros creamos la Teología de la Liberación’. Un aporte al origen de este movimiento religioso en América Latina” (‘We created Liberation Theology.’ Input regarding the origin of this religious movement in Latin America), Religión en Revolución.blogspot.com, 03 May 2015, <http://religionrevolucion.blogspot.com/2015/05/nosotros-creamos-la-teologia-de-la.html>

[Interviewer] “In general, would you say that the diffusion of liberation theology had some kind of connection with the soviet regime? [Pacepa responding] Yes...The movement was born in the KGB, and had a name invented by the KGB: Liberation Theology. During those years, the KGB had a predilection for movements of ‘liberation.’”

“the “theology of liberation” has always been respected as such by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith”

“Its [Hezbollah] leader Nasralá was met with to discuss drug trafficking, money laundering, the provision of weapons and passports”

OE Watch Commentary: In an article in a leading Madrid newspaper (ABC) author and political analyst Emili Blasco highlights an item from a just-released investigative book of which he is the author. That highlighted item is a revelation that Nicolas Maduro, the current leader of the government in Venezuela, personally negotiated with leaders of the Hezbollah terrorist organization. That meeting took place in Damascus in 2007, while Madura was Hugo Chávez’ exterior minister. At the time Chávez was attempting, successfully, to improve relations with the regime in Tehran. The resulting agreement between the two regimes provided for the welcome presence of a number of Hezbollah cells inside Venezuela.

Blasco provides details of the negotiation process, and of the agreement and its purposes, in the 376-page book, Bumerán Chávez. He asserts that his book provides other valuable background into the current collapsing condition of Venezuela. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**

Source: Emili Blasco, “Nicolás Maduro negoció con Hizbolá la presencia de sus milicianos en Venezuela” (Nicolas Maduro negotiated with Hezbollah regarding the presence of its militants in Venezuela), ABC.es, 21 April 2015, <http://www.abc.es/internacional/20150421/abci-maduro-negocio-hizbola-201504202119.html>

“Its [Hezbollah] leader Nasralá was met with to discuss drug trafficking, money laundering, the provision of weapons and passports...Nicolas Maduro negotiated directly with the chief of Hezbollah, Hasan Nasrallah, the deployment of cells of organizations of that radical Shiite organization in and from Venezuela.”

Source: Emili J. Blasco, Bumerán Chávez: Los fraudes que llevaron al colapso de Venezuela (Chavez Bumerang: The Frauds that Brought on the Collapse of Venezuela). Washington; Madrid: Center for Investigative Journalism in the Americas, 2015.

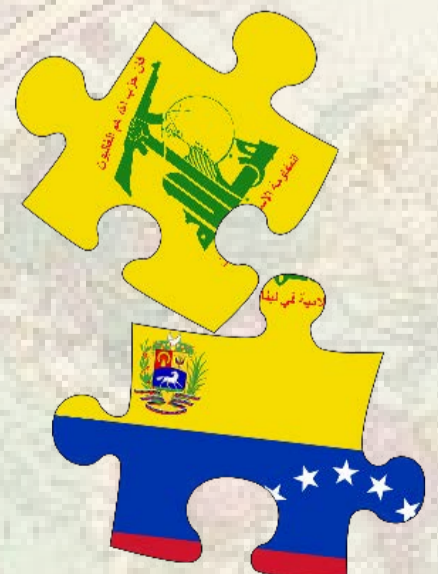
“Rafael Isea [then Chávez’ vice minister of finance and a government bank president] was startled in Damascus. When the plane landed at the military base, only to refuel [the plane was in route to Tehran] a Syrian security official suddenly boarded the plane and asked him to accompany him. ‘You have to get off here, you have a meeting; a government official from your country is waiting for you.’ .. he was taken in an official car of the Bashar al Assad government to a hotel...the vice minister received a call. It was Nicolas Maduro, who asked him to go to the room where he was staying....”

Radical Islam’s Western Foothold: Hugo Chavez and Hezbollah

By Sam Pickell

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

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



Professor Alejandro Moreno Outlines the Growth and Symptoms of Social Chaos

22 April 2015

“An effective State is forming underneath the formal State ...”

OE Watch Commentary: *Occasionally we come upon an especially clarifying and useful analysis of what happens in complex conflict environments -- an analysis that can help explain conditions not just in one city or country, but generally. One such analysis comes from Venezuela, in the form of an expertly done, 4,600-word interview with Professor Alejandro Moreno, a social scientist who has long studied the poorer boroughs of Caracas.*

*While most observers, of whatever academic or experiential background, seem to conclude that general material well-being in that city is declining precipitously, Professor Moreno, who appears especially well informed and prepared to opine, highlights a few alarming details. According to him, the average age for active gangster participation has dropped sharply, and delinquent gangster organizations have become the state. We seem to be witnessing a Lord-of-the-Flies-sort of primitive reconstruction of order from chaos, but not a pleasant order. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)***

Source: Miguel Blanco, “Alejandro Moreno: ‘De seguir como vamos, el país desaparecerá como sociedad’” (Alejandro Moreno; ‘If we keep going as we are, the country will disappear as a society’), Contrapunto.com, 19 April 2015, <http://contrapunto.com/index.php/nacional/item/19735-alejandro-moreno-de-seguir-como-vamos-venezuela-desaparecera-como-sociedad>; Leo Felipe Campos y Hector Bujanda, “¡Rescatamos a Venezuela! Alejandro Moreno: ‘De seguir como vamos, el país desaparecerá como sociedad’” (Let’s Rescue Venezuela! Alejandro Moreno; ‘If we keep going as we are, the country will disappear as a society’), DolarToday, 22 April 2015, <https://dolartoday.com/rescatemos-venezuela-alejandro-moreno-de-seguir-como-vamos-el-pais-desaparecera-como-sociedad/>

“Impunity, the expansion of delinquent networks, the violent discourse and absence of communication between the elites and popular sectors has created a scenario that threatens to destroy the sense of coexistence”...

-- **[interviewer’s question]** “And qualitatively, what is the condition of the delinquency, especially that which originates in the popular sectors?”

-- **[Alejandro Moreno]** “If at some time the average age of the delinquent was around 18 or 20 years, now it must run around 15 or 16 years, but with a great incidence of younger ages. In our research we have found that all of subjects say that their inclusion in violent delinquency began, more or less, at 14 years. One can say that today the beginning for many of the delinquents is around 12.”...

-- [interviewer’s assertion] “But a network implies the flow of something.

-- **[Alejandro Moreno]** “Flow of information. Flow of arms, of techniques, of ideas.”

-- **[interviewer’s question]** “Do you think a network of Small armies is being born?”

-- **[Alejandro Moreno]** “An effective State is forming underneath the formal State, [which is] ineffective and empty.”

-- **[interviewer’s question]** “A parastate?”

-- **[Alejandro Moreno]** “No, a State. What is it that a State does? It governs persons conduct and manner of living. These groups are governing this in almost whichever barrio. At six in the afternoon, the people are no longer in the street and when they go out they better look all around to see what’s going on. You can’t live in such a place, you have to keep yourself mute. This includes romance: I can’t have a relationship with a certain girl...I don’t if I am explaining myself. And these groups, to the extent that they interrelate and seam together networks, are going to create a complete State. The State per se.”

OE Watch Commentary: *As reported by this source, the Argentinian government is making advances on the development of military-grade unmanned aerial vehicles much more sophisticated than those previously developed. For example, newer versions will be more advanced than the EA Lipan M3 (2007) and the Lipan XM4 (2012), which were intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance devices previously developed by the Argentinian military. La Nacion further indicated that tier II, III, and IV drones will be produced, but that they will not be allowed to transport missiles or sophisticated weaponry even though they are military grade.*

Official sources claim that the devices will be used to conduct scientific studies and to monitor borders and other unspecified regions within the country. In recent months they have been used in Buenos Aires by the national tax agency to identify some 200 mansions and about 100 swimming pools that have not been declared by their owners. Apparently the homes were built on lots registered as empty in an exclusive neighborhood near the nation's capital.

*As for future use, the Argentinian government is working to amend Article 36 of the Aeronautical Code, which would emplace regulations for domestic drone use. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)***

Source: “Defensa: avanza en el país la fabricación de sofisticados drones” (Production of Sophisticated Drones Advances in Argentina), La Nacion. Accessed on April 23, 2015 from <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1706379-avanza-en-el-pais-la-fabricacion-de-sofisticados-drones>

The Argentinian government is making advances on the development of unmanned aerial aircraft much more sophisticated than those previously developed. Official sources claim that the devices will be used to conduct scientific studies and to monitor borders and other unspecified regions within the country. Organizations responsible for overseeing UAV activity were cited as the Department of Defense, Invap (state owned company) and the Chancellor's Office.

A Home-Grown Enterprise

Representatives from the Pink House (US equivalent of the White House) and the San Martín Palace confirmed that plans are in place to build tier II, III, and IV drones. As for production, plans are to build domestically and import parts if necessary. Nationally produced drones in categories III and IV will meet international missile technology standards to which Argentina has adhered to since 1993. Furthermore, UAVs will meet permitted international standards as reported by the Pink House.

Regulation?

Within Argentina there is no current legislature which regulates the domestic use of drones. What this means is that drones used since 1990 by the military, but there have never been rules established for civilian oversight. In addressing this concern, Agustín Rossi, the Argentinian Minister of National Defense stated the following, “it is necessary to maintain open lines of communication regarding drone technology. However, is important that we not permit impositions from developed countries that will contradict national projects.” Future regulation changes will likely stem from an amendment to Article 36 of the Aeronautical Code which has already been proposed.

OE Watch Commentary: *Los Perrones is an extremely powerful contraband transport group that provides services to Mexican, Central American, and South American drug cartels such as Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel. The group is also said to work directly with Barrio 18 Mara Salvatrucha members to protect shipments in transit. What is unique about the organization is that, although it is the leading contraband transport country in the region, it is relatively unknown. Furthermore, despite the group's abilities to coordinate logistical aspects involved with transporting multi-ton shipments of cocaine, Los Perrones has shown no interest in transforming into an actual cartel. Instead, it has branded itself as the transport company of choice in the region and will likely remain as such.*

Two factors that could possibly hinder the future operations of this organization are the recent arrests of the group's original leaders and subsequent infighting among remaining members. However, the horizontal structure followed by the group has allowed fellow group members to step in and assume the responsibilities of previous leaders with relative ease.

This source is also reporting that a new generation of leaders has emerged within the group, and that instead of having five key leaders as before, there are now multiple leaders who are allegedly diversifying Los Perrones operations. The manner in which they are doing this was not reported, but what is known is that, despite set-backs, the group continues to remain a major force in the region.
End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)

Source: "Los Perrones, el poderoso grupo criminal que pocos conocen" (Los Perrones, the Powerful Criminal Group Known by Few), BBC Mundo. Accessed on May 05, 2015, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2014/08/140820_el_salvador_perrones_transportistas_cocaina_jcps

Los Perrones is a relatively unknown but extremely powerful drug transport group comprised of business owners, contraband smugglers, and human smugglers. The group gained notoriety as the most powerful transport group in Central America by moving large-scale shipments of cocaine for Pablo Escobar and the Medellín Cartel. Following the dismantling of the Medellín Cartel in the early 90s, Los Perrones began working with other criminal groups including the Norte de Valle Cartel of Colombia. Today, they are the preferred transport group of Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel in Mexico. Los Perrones also works with the Barrio 18 faction of the Mara Salvatrucha to protect cocaine shipments as they are moved from El Salvador to pick-up points within Guatemala and Honduras.

History

The original "Los Perrones" was formed by multiple Salvadorian nationals in the late 70s who at that time referred to themselves as a "Transportation Federation." Their principal areas of operation were located along the Pacific Coast in Eastern El Salvador and along its shared border region with Honduras. Los Perrones also used the Gulf of Fonseca to move contraband from Nicaragua. Today, the group runs operations in Eastern and Western sectors of El Salvador and has been divided into two geographical subdivisions known as Los Perrones Occidentales and Los Perrones Orientales.

With the start of the Civil War in El Salvador (1980-1992), Los Perrones prospered as they used their Eastern front to smuggle liquor, rice, cigarettes, milk, and cheese into the country from areas as far south as Panama. In the late 80s, they began their initial evolution from basic contraband smugglers into drug and human smugglers. Today, they are the known as the most successful transport group in the region.

Modus Operandi

Los Perrones, as opposed to other drug cartels operating in the region, have relied on bribery instead of violence to achieve cooperation with authorities. In fact, the bribery is so far reaching that the group is said to receive nearly exclusive protection from the National Civil Police (PNC). Los Perrones is also said to have financed multiple political campaigns and has even influenced the appointment of Legislative Assembly representatives. Following the death of key Perrones leader Chepe Luna in June 2014, local news media sources reported that the system was already making agreements with his successors to maintain bribery agreements.

As for moving the contraband itself, Los Perrones receive incoming cocaine shipments from South America along its Pacific coast via go-fast boats or semi-submersibles. At high-sea, the shipments are off-loaded onto fishing vessels and delivered to shore. Once on land, legal transport companies are used to move large scale cocaine shipments from El Salvador to Honduras and Guatemala. From these locations, the shipments are picked up by other drug cartels.

OE Watch Commentary: *La Mosquitia is located in the easternmost part of Honduras along the Mosquito Coast and is known for its lush rainforests and diverse indigenous populations. Cut off from urban society, this 32,500-square-meter region has few roads and is best accessed by air and water routes. Despite the fact that it is difficult to travel to the region by land, its location is geographically perfect for receiving aerial drug shipments from Venezuela and Colombia, which is why the area is home to more than 200 clandestine airstrips, as reported by El Heraldo. In fact, this same source reports that nearly 79% of all narco flights leaving from the aforementioned countries use La Mosquita Coast as a drop-off point for cocaine shipments.*

*Still, this daunting number has not stopped the Honduran military from conducting widespread bombing campaigns in the region aimed at curbing the influx of narco flights. As part of this campaign, the National Inter-Institutional Security Forces (FUSINA), which comprises police and soldiers, follows a four-phase systematic approach to eradicate landing strips. As reported by El Heraldo, they include identification of an airstrip, seizure, movement of explosives to destruction site, and the actual bombing. In employing this method, FUSINA reportedly destroyed 48 clandestine airstrips in 2014, the majority of which were located in the Brus Laguna sector of the Gracias de Dios Province. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)***

Source: “Honduras: Así destruyen las “narcopistas” (The Destruction of Narco Air Strips in Honduras), El Heraldo. Accessed on April 28, 2015 from <http://www.elheraldo.hn/alfrente/795661-209/honduras-as%C3%AD-destruyen-las-narcopistas>

Identification

Clandestine landing strips are most commonly built in areas of remote access within the dense Honduran rainforest in areas such as Brus Laguna, Ahuas and Puerto Lempira. Principal means used by Honduran authorities to discover these strips include aerial reconnaissance, ground patrols, and the collection of human intelligence as reported by El Heraldo. Once detected, exact geo-coordinates are passed to the National Inter-Institutional Security Forces (FUSINA) operating in the Gracias a Dios province where a destruction mission may be planned if deemed necessary.

Site Preparation

Once an airstrip is identified, El Heraldo indicated that explosive experts and support staff assigned to the 1st Engineering Battalion move to the site where they dig three 90 centimeter holes in a triangular formation. In each hole, soldiers place 50 pounds of ANFO. Next, a 45 foot slow burning fuse is attached to detonation cord. This cord is then wrapped around 2 bars of dynamite and a 1 pound bar of explosive emulsion and placed on top of the ANFO. Finally, the hole is covered and only the slow burning fuse remains visible.

Ready to Bomb

Before the slow burning fuse is even lit, non-essential support staff retreat 200 meters from the blast zone. Once this has occurred, the explosives experts light the fuse and move back to join the others. At the two-minute mark, smoke coming off the slow burning fuse can be seen and the whole area begins to smell like explosive powder. Within three minutes of being lit, the fuse has already burned its way to the explosives and detonation occurs. Depending on the length of the landing strip, this process may be repeated six or more times. Craters left by the detonations measure approximately 18 x 7 meters (length/width) and are meant to render the airstrip unusable by traffickers.

Destruction Complete

In a perfect world, a single bombing campaign would impede traffickers from rebuilding in the same area but this is far from true as those airstrips considered to be essential for operations are quickly rebuilt. If this is the case, traffickers will generally allow the ground to settle for a few days before commencing repair. At that point, hundreds of workers are hired to work during night hours to meticulously repair the holes and ensure a smooth landing strip.

Security Concerns and Kidnappings Continue to Affect Mexican Ranchers

28 April 2015

OE Watch Commentary: *When faced with the choice to abandon their ranches or face certain death at the hands of organized crime groups in Mexico, many farmers are choosing to flee and lose everything to survive. This phenomenon of overt property theft gained momentum in 2010, when drug cartels such as Los Zetas and the Gulf Cartel began seizing strategically located ranches in Tamaulipas to use as safe houses, for weapons and drugs storage, and as initial recruitment facilities. Widespread attention was initially brought to this practice in August 2010, when Los Zetas kidnapped and subsequently massacred 72 undocumented persons for allegedly refusing to work for the organization. Prior to being killed, the 72 were held at a ranch located in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, located just 85 miles from Brownsville, Texas, and serving as a principal illegal immigration corridor.*

At the time of the San Fernando massacre a regional livestock leader from the state indicated that organized crime groups had already seized around 5,000 individual properties and farms. Since that time little has changed, as drug cartels continue to push ranchers out of their properties in agricultural states such as Tabasco, Veracruz, and Tamaulipas.

*Mexican Congress Representative Leonor Romero Sevilla indicated that the displacement of ranchers has affected not only ranchers, but the entire Mexican economy as well, as agriculture and livestock production serve as a significant employment source. In providing recommendations to the government to reverse rancher displacement, Romero Sevilla is calling for added security presence in key agricultural zones within Mexico so that ranchers can slowly return to their properties with the confidence that they will be protected. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)***

Source: “Inseguridad y secuestro siguen pegando a la ganadería: diputada” (Insecurity and Kidnappings Continue Affecting Ranchers), El Diario. Accessed on April 28, 2015 from http://diario.mx/Nacional/2015-04-06_74c2e873/inseguridad-y-secuestro-siguen-pegando-a-la-ganaderia-diputada/

According to PAN Representative Leonor Romero Sevilla, insecurity and kidnappings perpetrated by Mexican drug cartels are forcing ranchers to abandon their properties or to work at below production capacity in order to safeguard their lives and those of their families. Romero Sevilla further indicated that reduced production is common as ranchers who choose to leave their properties hire caretakers who work with limited to no supervision from the actual ranch owner. Those agricultural states most affected by organized crime insecurity and kidnappings are Tabasco, Veracruz, and Tamaulipas where it is not uncommon to see “decreased or nearly non-existent” production. Romero Sevilla further indicated that in past years, 113.8 million hectares or 58% of all land in Mexico was used for agricultural purposes but that it is now much less.

The Way Ahead

Romero Sevilla is urging the Secretariat of the Interior (Segob) to take a more in-depth look at forced rancher displacement as it is becoming more serious and clearly demonstrates security issues posed by organized crime groups to not only ranchers but the entire Mexican population. In doing so, she is asking the government to form an agreement to create/coordinate programs with individual states with the end goal of protecting ranchers from kidnapping and extortion. Recommendations have also been made for the PGR to investigate previous cases of extortion and kidnapping of ranchers in an attempt to mitigate future incidents.

OE Watch Commentary: *The following article offers an overview of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) recruitment efforts from a Malaysia perspective. What is most interesting is the group's use of anonymity to help members "escape the eyes and the ears of the police" in Malaysia.*

Dr. Azmi Hassan, a professor and geostrategist at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, was interviewed for the article. He explains that ISIL recruiters in Malaysia use religion via social media to try to induce impressionable young Muslims into joining the group and eventually jihad activities. He says that the difference between ISIL and other terrorist groups, such as Jemaah Islamiya and Al-Qa'ida, is that those who are targeted by the ISIL recruiters do not know who their "allies" are. Only the recruiters know who everyone is. Therefore, when one recruit is arrested, then others can continue to elude authorities.

These recruits continue to live under conditions of anonymity until they travel to Syria. Once there, arrangements are made for them to live with other ISIL followers from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Southern Philippines.

*The article goes on to talk about the recruitment and/or enslavement of women, some who volunteer to be jihadists or to marry jihadists and others who are forced to become sex slaves. The article expresses concern that these women are able to slip past authorities. According to Malaysian police data, at least ten Malaysian women reached Syria or Iraq and married fighters after eluding authorities. Another seven women, however, were successfully stopped by the Malaysian police. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Source: Lan Jinzhi, "IS大威脅(系列3). 提防落網時探出線索 赴敘同路人不相識 (ISIL Big Threat (Series 3): Companions to Syria Do Not Know Each Other to Prevent Being Trapped for Information if Arrested)," China Press, 29 April 2015, <http://www.chinapress.com.my/node/618193>.

Companions to Syria Do Not Know Each Other to Prevent Being Trapped for Information if Arrested

"Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL) is recruiting followers in Malaysia...
 ...they do not know who their companions are. It seems that they are not a united group. However, this is exactly the way they use to escape the eyes and the ears of the police.
 Even if the Malaysian police arrested people suspected of being involved in ISIL, it was very hard to trace the identity and whereabouts of other (ISIL members) from them.
 It is worrying that there are other fish who slipped through the net of police. They may be supported by family members, or family members do not report (them to the police) despite having information for fear that they will be arrested.

A Central Asian Perspective of Security in Afghanistan

By Matthew Stein

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

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

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



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

“At present, the Army perceives the importance of using this device and is encouraging research into the production of a Mini-UAV in Thailand for internal use.”

OE Watch Commentary: A Thai media report published in May announced that Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Prawit Wongsuwan handed over an unspecified number of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), on behalf of the Defense Technology Institute and the Royal Air Force Academy, to the Royal Thai Army. These are likely mini-UAVs, said to have been jointly developed by Thailand’s Defense Technology Institute and Royal Air Force Academy. According to the first article, the aircraft is able to operate in a radius of more than 10 kilometers for over 1 1/2 hours, reaching heights of 500 meters. It is equipped with cameras and can be controlled either manually or automatically. The UAVs will be used to patrol Thailand’s unstable southern provinces.

The second article, written in December 2014, gives an overview on the use of mini-UAVs in supporting military patrols combating regional unrest. According to the article, UAVs are used in tasks “such as patrolling, watching, intelligence, spying, and examining geographical features.”

The Thai military has reportedly been using mini-UAVs since 2012. That same year, “120 sets” of the U.S.-made Raven RQ 11B model were imported from Israel. While the newly developed UAVs will be used for patrols to reduce the risk of attacks on security officials, they could also become a source of imports for other countries. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

Source: “Drones Given to Southern Army Authorities,” National News Bureau of Thailand, 13 May 2015, http://thainews.prd.go.th/CenterWeb/NewsEN/NewsDetail?NT01_NewsID=WNSOC5805130010040.

Drones Given to Southern Army Authorities

The Deputy PM handed over the drones on behalf of the Defense Technology Institute and the Royal Air Force Academy who jointly developed the aircraft. Deputy Defense Minister General Udomdej Sitabutr, as the Army Commander, received the drones.

Source: ““Sumet Panphet, “รู้จัก “มินิ-ยูเอวี” อากาศยานไร้คนขับในภารกิจดับไฟใต้ (Get to Know ‘Mini UAV’ – Unmanned Aerial Vehicle to be Used for Southern Solution Tasks),” Isara Institute, 19 December 2015, <http://www.isranews.org/item/35234-uav.html>.

Get to Know ‘Mini UAV’ – Unmanned Aerial Vehicle to be Used for Southern Solution Tasks

... Mr. Pris Samutsan, a writer on munitions in Gun and Vest Online Magazine, whose pen name is “Zenith,” and a former interpreter for the American military, added that the Mini-UAV, or unmanned aerial vehicle, is a piece



Source: Thai News Agency video capture. Thailand’s newly released UAV.

of military hardware used for spying operations in order to support patrols. A Mini-UAV is smaller than a UAV, so it can be carried by those on patrol.

Mini-UAVs have been used by the military since 2012. The model was the Raven RQ 11 B, made in the United States, and used by the US and allied forces. Also, this model is the one used in the southern border provinces.

At present, the Army perceives the importance of using this device and is encouraging research into the production of a Mini-UAV in Thailand for internal use.

... in 2012, the Royal Thai Army, in the period when Gen. Prayut Chan-ocha was the commander in chief of the Army, imported 120 sets of Mini-UAVs of the Model Raven type from Israel.

In addition, the Army cooperated with the National Research Council of Thailand on producing Mini-UAV’s and other munitions, such as explosive ordnance disposal robots for use mostly in security operations in the south.

“Knock on any door in this area and they will tell you they do not trust the Thai state.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Thai government recently introduced a new strategy to battle the ongoing insurgency that has been plaguing the far south of the country for more than a decade: DNA swabbing. Suspected rebels are targeted for testing and an analysis of post-blast explosive residue would then provide answers leading to criminal charges.*

To date, more than 40,000 people have been swabbed for DNA. According to the Muslim Attorney Centre in Pattani, charges in security-related incidents are set to increase, partly due to the availability of more DNA evidence. Last year a total of 37 people were charged in the province. During the first 4 months of 2015 the figure had already reached 22.

*While DNA testing is highly accurate, there have been complaints regarding the heavy-handed approach to acquiring the samples. Some community members are said to have been tested multiple times, even being threatened at gunpoint when they refuse. As a result of this, many people in the southern region have grown to distrust the government. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Source: Amy Sawitta Lefevre, “DNA Swabs Becomes New Weapon in Insurgency Battle,” Bangkok Post, 7 May 2015, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/special-reports/554271/dna-swabs-becomes-new-weapon-in-insurgency-battle>.

Despite criticism over the coup and its subsequent handling of the economy, the military government can point to a drop of more than 50% drop in attacks by Muslim Malay rebels across the restive region.

The Muslim Attorney Centre in the province of Pattani says security-related charges this year are set to exceed 2014’s, in part because more DNA evidence is being used. Last year 37 people were charged in the province while in the first four months of this year the figure was 22.



The Afghan Guerilla’s Dilemma: Tying up loose ends after the Soviets left By LTC (R) Lester W. Grau, PhD, Foreign Military Studies Office

In February 1989, as the Soviet vehicles ground their way homeward over the snow-covered mountains of the Hindu Kush, the Afghan Mujahideen guerillas were suddenly without a foreign enemy. Their focus of over nine years of combat was departing. What does a guerilla do next? As the US begins to make its departure from Afghanistan, this paper explores what happened to these guerrillas in Afghanistan when Soviet forces left.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Guerrilla%27s-dilemma.pdf>

“The new railway, as a ‘major artery’ ... brings the military’s power projection and combat readiness force movement on to the ‘contemporary train’ of civil-military integration.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The following article talks about a new potential vehicle for power projection by the Chinese military. It states that for the first time in the Lanzhou Military Region, a high-speed rail was used “for long-range power projection with a whole unit of forces.” Personnel and equipment from an unidentified Lanzhou Military Region-based brigade traveled approximately 330 miles to kick off a “combat readiness rollout drill.”*

The railway, which runs between Lanzhou and Xinjiang and was completed in 2014, is viewed as a major artery, improving and enhancing passenger and cargo transport capacity in the region, while also bringing the “military’s power projection and combat readiness force movement on the ‘contemporary train’ of civil-military integration.”

*Earlier, troops traveled on highways during maneuver drills. This new mode of transportation is an improvement. With troops now able to step out of their barracks and onto the high speed train, troop movement will be significantly faster. This could also lay the foundation for an even broader expansion of power projection. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Source: Xie Dongmeng, “兰州军区首次利用动车实施整建制兵力远程投送 (For the First Time, PLA Lanzhou Military Region Uses High Speed Rail for Long-range Power Projection with a Whole Unit of Forces),” Jiefangjun Bao, 16 May 2015, http://jz.chinamil.com.cn/gd/2015-05/16/content_6493904.htm.

For the First Time, PLA Lanzhou Military Region Uses High Speed Rail for Long-range Power Projection with a Whole Unit of Forces

... In 40 minutes, a train with letter D speedily moved out of the station platform. [An entire] battalion in the said brigade, with all personnel and equipment, maneuvered toward the designated zone some 1,000 li away [a li is a Chinese mile, which often varies but is usually the equivalent of approximately 1/3 of an English mile]. A leader of the relevant department of the military region responsible for command and coordination said in a briefing: That was the first time the Lanzhou Military Region used the high speed rail for long-range power projection with a whole unit of forces. The means substantially enhanced the force’s high-speed maneuverability.

... The new railway, as a “major artery”, not only improves and enhances the passenger and cargo transport capacity in the northwest region, but also brings the military’s power projection and combat readiness force movement on to the “contemporary train” of civil-military integration.

Looking the Other Way: Chinese Interpretations of Russia's Annexation of Crimea

OE Watch Commentary: *In an article in China's leading Russian studies journal, Russian Studies, Feng Shuai argues that throughout the post-Soviet period Crimea failed to develop its own distinct identity, and this ultimately led to Crimeans embracing reunification with Russia. Feng, who works at the Center for Russian and Central Asian Studies at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies, is one of China's leading scholars of Russia and the former Soviet Union. He is very familiar with the current Russian and Western literature on the subject of nation-building and identity construction.*

Feng traces Crimea's existence throughout history, focusing primarily on the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. The essence of his argument is that Kiev was unable to develop a viable Ukrainian national identity that included Crimea, and Crimean Tatars were not able to develop a distinct Crimean identity, not least because they are not the majority of the population on the peninsula. So the strengthening of a Russian national identity among residents of Crimea was almost inevitable, and with Moscow's support it became unstoppable.

Where Feng's interpretation of events differs from the dominant narrative in the West is that he sees Crimea as genuinely embracing Russian identity and reunification (rather than annexation) with Russia. This interpretation is becoming the dominant one in China today, partly due to Beijing's strategic relationship with Moscow. But the PRC also has strong economic and diplomatic ties with Kiev. The result is that China finds itself stuck between Moscow and Kiev. Beijing doesn't want to alienate Putin by condemning Russia's actions in Ukraine, but it doesn't want to abandon Kiev either. The result is a moderate approach that expresses regret over the conflict, calls on all sides to end the violence, and interprets the situation in such a way that no one party is to blame.

*Another factor that is certainly involved is the analogous situation that exists with Taiwan, a territory Beijing argues it has rights in that it may someday seek to exert, either in a similar or dissimilar fashion to Russia's military operations in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Thus, the Chinese coverage of the Ukraine crisis has a conspicuous absence of any blame on Putin himself and certainly no talk of Russian aggression. As for Crimea itself, since China still hopes for the reintegration of Taiwan, it cannot help but be sympathetic – if not even jealous – of Russia's annexation of Crimea. **End OE Watch Commentary (Marsh)***

Source: “封帅 (Feng Shuai), “悲剧的诞生: 身份认同困境与克里米亚的命运” (The Birth of Tragedy: The Dilemma of Identity and the Destiny of Crimea), 俄罗斯研究 (Russian Studies), June 2014, Vol. 187 Issue (3): 3-41. http://202.120.85.33/Jweb_elsyj/CN/abstract/abstract314.shtml#

The Dilemma of Identity and the Destiny of Crimea

A common challenge for all post-Soviet societies is the issue of identity, and the “dilemma of Crimea's identity is of the most far-reaching” and with the greatest impact internationally. Crimean identity construction was driven forward in 1954 by Nikita Khrushchev and his proposal to the Supreme Soviet that Crimea be “placed under the jurisdiction of Ukraine... in order to highlight the ‘long-lasting friendship’ of Russia and Ukraine” in commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereiaslav. This phase was primarily one of administrative institutions.

From Stalin to Khrushchev and then to Gorbachev, “the leaders of the Soviet Union during different eras took conflicting policies to deal with the issue of Crimea's identity,” which led to the “dislocation” of Crimean identity and ultimately to the current dilemma.

Crimea essentially had three possible courses during the post-Soviet period “to construct its identity... first, to promote a national identity [by] constructing a Ukrainian identity; second, to promote its regional identity in order to establish its identity as an independent area; and third, to promote Russian national identity.”

Since “Russian is the common language of Crimea,” the absence of a Ukrainian identity or an organized Tatar opposition to Ukrainianization or Russification “made it difficult to construct a new national and united regional identity through Russian historical narratives.” Additionally, due to several centuries of Russification, “the entire symbolic system of the peninsula had become completely Russified, including geographical names, city statues, cultural and political symbols... [all] have been marked with a distinctive Russian label.”

Identity construction in the post-Soviet space is very complicated, and “the Ukrainian central government does not have enough power to guide the construction of an identity.” Crimeans ultimately “decided to maintain and strengthen their Russian identity.” Their joining with Russia was “ultimately inseparable from the interference of external forces, but [it was done with] the overwhelming vote of Crimean residents and the social situation remains relatively calm... [clearly] the majority of Crimean residents support this change of political identity and are supportive [of it]... one can even say that they have been looking forward to this change of identity.”

China Considers Cyber Warfare and the Law of Armed Conflict: Part Two, Should Cyber War be Regulated by the Law of Armed Conflict

June 2015

“Therefore, although cyber warfare is a brand new operational means, operational mode, or form of war, it should still be regulated by the Law of Armed Conflict in order to better adapt to progress made in international humanitarianism.”

OE Watch Commentary: The article under discussion was published in China Military Science and is one of the first open source Chinese attempts at tying cyber war to the Law of Armed Conflict. The article is being dissected and presented in four parts: definitions and characteristics (see OE Watch, May 2015); whether cyber war should be regulated by the Law of Armed Conflict; how cyber war restricts the Law of Armed Conflict; and self-defense and liability in cyber war. The article seeks to answer four questions according to the abstract: How should cyber warfare be defined in the context of the existing Law of Armed Conflict? What is the relation between cyber warfare and the prohibition on the use of force under the Charter of the United Nations? Should cyber warfare be regulated and curtailed by the existing Law of Armed Conflict? And how should legal liability for cyber warfare be determined and investigated? **End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)**

Source: Xie Dan and Chen Xingyu, “Considerations Triggered by Cyber Warfare on the Law of Armed Conflict—A Case Study and Jurisprudential Exploration,” China Military Science, No. 5 2013, pp. 130-139.

...at the legal level, it is necessary to analyze and determine whether it constitutes “use of force” before we can determine whether and how cyber warfare can be regulated by the Law of Armed Conflict.

First, the UN Charter failed to point out specifically what kind of action constitutes a “use of force.” Next, regulations governing the ban of the use of force were established based on our understanding of mechanized warfare. With advances in science and technology, when a new mode of operation such as cyber warfare enters the stage of war, people discovered that despite the fact that force is used based on its objective and consequence, as far as tools and forms used are concerned, it does not involve “use of force” in name.

However, through the use of information technology as an operational means, computers and networks can directly weaken or eliminate enemy military capabilities, resulting in economic losses and casualties. Therefore, cyber warfare can produce the same objective effect as that of a military attack.

...some foreign scholars compared cyber warfare to a conventional operational mode. They proposed to use seven (7) factors to determine whether a specific cyber warfare event was equivalent to “use of force:” intensity, immediacy, directionality, aggressiveness, measurability, assumed legitimacy and accountability. [Schmitt, Harrison, and Wingfield, “Computers and War: The Legal Battlespace”] ...US scholar Sharp advocates that “any computer network attack launched deliberately to produce destructive consequences in the territory of a sovereign nation belongs to illegal use of force and may trigger an armed retaliatory attack in the name of self-defense.” [Sharp, “Cyberspace and the Use of Force”]

To this end, if cyber warfare is excluded from the principle of prohibition of use of force as stipulated in the UN Charter, then such offensive action is deemed to be condoned or even encouraged. This is obviously contrary to the basic purpose of the UN Charter, which is to maintain international peace and safety.

Therefore, although cyber warfare is a brand new operational means, operational mode, or form of war, it should still be regulated by the Law of Armed Conflict in order to better adapt to progress made in international humanitarianism.

(continued)

China Considers Cyber Warfare and the Law of Armed Conflict: Part Three/Four, Restrictions of Cyber Warfare from the Law of Armed Conflict/Self Defense in Cyber War/Liabilities of Cyber War

June 2015

Source: Xie Dan and Chen Xingyu, "Considerations Triggered by Cyber Warfare on the Law of Armed Conflict—A Case Study and Jurisprudential Exploration," China Military Science, No. 5 2013, pp. 130-139.

OE Watch Commentary: *The article under discussion was published in China Military Science and is one of the first open source Chinese attempts at tying cyber war to the Law of Armed Conflict. This is the final installment discussing the article, covering how cyber war is restricted by the Law of Armed Conflict within the context of the issues of self-defense and liability in cyber war. Restriction, distinction, and proportionality are listed as the principles of restricting cyber war. Self-defense considerations include the circumstances under which a cyber-self-defense response is authorized. Liabilities of cyber warfare include national liability and individual liability. These three sections will be so noted below with the appropriate excerpts.*
End OE Watch Commentary (Thomas)

Cyber Warfare Restrictions

...the principle of restriction was clearly stipulated. It restricts the right for various parties engaged in an armed conflict to choose different operational methods and means. It prohibits the choice of any operational method and means that does not facilitate achieving a combat objective, causes excessive injury or inflicts unnecessary pain. The principle of distinction requires various parties engaged in a conflict to differentiate combatants from non-combatants, armed troops from civilians, and military targets from non-military targets. Principle of proportionality requires that collateral damage, such as civilian injuries and civilian property damage should be kept at a minimum during the course of launching an attack against a military target. Collateral damage should not exceed anticipated, specific and direct military benefit to be accomplished in military action.

Self Defense

To this end, from the standpoint of self-defense, a country may be allowed to implement anticipatory self-defense before its enemy launches a cyber-attack. However, this type self-defense must only be implemented when the following conditions are satisfied simultaneously. Otherwise, this type of self-defense is extremely likely to be construed as aggression. First, the country that is going to defend itself must have sufficient evidence to show the hostile intent of another country to launch a cyber-attack. Next, the other country refuses to abandon such an attack after this country has exhausted all available means. Finally, when the country uses cyber warfare to defend itself, it must not exceed the necessary limit.

Liabilities

National

With specific reference to the unique characteristics and consequences of cyber warfare, in determining national liability, using "overall control" as the standard is significantly better than using "effect control" as the standard. If the standard of "effect control" is applied to civilian groups or individuals initiating or engaging in cyber warfare, a country is held liable only when there is proof that the country has "effect control" over those groups or individuals. Considering the fact that cyber-attack is anonymous and covert in nature, it is extremely difficult to prove the identity of the attacker in practice. This type of standard actually gives countries using "network militia" to launch cyber-attacks an excuse to evade liability. On the other hand, "overall control" only requires elimination of reasonable doubt to hold a country liable for a cyber-attack. When this type of standard is adopted, numerous cyber-attack incidents may fall in the scope of national liability, such as the cyber-attack against Georgia in 2008.

Individual

The first issue is whether a civilian who plays a lead role or acts as a participant in national cyber warfare should be held liable as an individual...The second issue is how to pursue "superior responsibility." The "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court" ("Statute" hereafter) divides superior responsibility into two major categories, i.e., responsibility of military commanders and responsibility of other superiors...because subordinates cannot be governed and controlled as tightly as military commanders, responsibility of superiors should also be different from that of military commanders. Based on the spirit of the "Statute," when a non-military target is damaged in a cyber-attack, other superiors are held legally liable only when they are aware of it or when they deliberately choose to ignore it.

Wider Role for Chinese Currency Will Lead to Greater Global Influence

OE Watch Commentary: *China's currency, the renminbi (RMB), is on a path to greater acceptance around the world both by multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank and private sector firms with cross-border dealings. Greater acceptance of the currency translates into lower international transaction costs for Chinese businesses, which benefit by avoiding the cost and uncertainty of having to change their money into other currencies, principally the US dollar. It also means that the Chinese government's decisions concerning how many RMB to put on the market (RMB liquidity) and at what price (RMB exchange value) will have a greater impact on international currency markets. These factors are of critical importance to the functioning of the global economy, as they impact investment allocation decisions of the banking sector, the "real" economy (goods & services), and how far a country's currency will go to cover its import bill (higher value currency generally means cheaper imports and therefore lower domestic inflation).*

The growing acceptance of the RMB will lead global financial actors and agencies to increase their level of concern with Chinese government decision-making concerning the RMB. The heightened concern is not intrinsically threatening to any other country, as China's choices will be constrained by its need to not destabilize international markets, from which it benefits, as well as its own domestic need to manage its greater involvement in currency exchange. However, all others on the global economic scene should be aware of the import of changes in the RMB's role to better anticipate how their own decision-making needs to adjust.

The first article highlights the RMB's current road to acceptance as an official reserve currency by the IMF and speaks of the systemic impact that such acceptance will have among both central banks and private sector firms. Of the two sectors, increased private sector RMB holdings is the more important compared to central banks holding more RMB through their share of the IMF's Special Drawing Rights "virtual currency," simply because private sector currency transactions dwarf those of central banks in volume and play an important indirect role in determining the relative cost of the goods and services exchanged in those transactions.

The second article addresses the Chinese government's explicit desire to increase the use of the RMB throughout Asia. China is the ASEAN nations' largest export market, while they are, in turn, China's third largest destination market. Over the decades of the ascendance of the US dollar, China has seen the advantages that can accrue to a country whose currency is the preferred means of exchange among different trading nations. China hopes that greater use of the RMB will lower costs to its export-oriented economy.

Source: "Support Builds for Crucial Renminbi Move," China Daily, 21 April 2015. <http://en.people.cn/business/n/2015/0421/c90778-8881314.html>

China Currency on Road to Global Reserve Status

Later this year, the International Monetary Fund will decide whether to include the Renminbi in its Special Drawing Rights - a "virtual currency" made up of a basket of other currencies. If this happens, RMB use around the world is set to soar. Automatically, all central banks would become holders of RMB exposure through their SDR assets. With the IMF's official stamp of approval, there would be a big boost to demand from investors and private companies.

Source: "Currency Reform Boosts China-ASEAN Businesses," Xinhua, 16 May 2015. <http://en.people.cn/n/2015/0516/c90000-8893176.html>

China Currency Reform as Economic Lubricant in Asia

(Currency) Exchanges between the two countries' currencies (China and Vietnam) had to be conducted via the U.S. dollar in local banks. The situation took a U-turn in late 2013, when China launched a series of pilot financial reforms in a host of border cities. Experts believe the Guangxi reforms will effectively contribute to President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiatives. "The financial reforms on the China-ASEAN border were aimed at forming a trade and investment mechanism that centers on the renminbi," said Huang Zhiyong, deputy dean of the Guangxi Academy of Social Sciences.

Source: "China faces 'no capital flight', says Commerce Ministry," China Daily, 13 May 2015. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2015-05/13/content_20704800.htm?utm_source=The+Sinocism+China.

Capital Flight Out of China

China has again ruled out the possibility of massive capital outflow, saying an overwhelming majority of foreign companies that pulled out their investments in the country were shell firms, The Beijing News reported on Wednesday. Statistics from the ministry showed that foreign direct investment (FDI) into China stood at 273.6 billion yuan (\$44.07 billion) in the first four months this year, an increase of 11.1 percent from a year earlier.

Continued: Wider Role for Chinese Currency Will Lead to Greater Global Influence

*In the third article we see a hint that China faces challenges from the growing role of the RMB. In order to be among the preferred currencies of international transactions, the RMB must be readily available. Yet, China has very strict capital controls that govern the movement of money across its borders in order to manage its economy, concentrate capital for domestic investment, and prevent rapid and destabilizing export of its capital stock. Relaxing these controls to gain effective reserve status would be a big step in normalizing the RMB and in some ways constrain the Chinese government's decision-making to maintain or flout international rules. As a more integrated global financial actor, Chinese influence within the global financial system will grow, but so too will Beijing find itself more dependent on the smooth functioning of that system. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zandoli)***

Turkey and China: Unlikely Strategic Partners

By Ms. Karen Kaya, Foreign Military Studies Office

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



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

The Significance of Changes in Russia's Military Doctrine

Introduction

Russia's annexation of the Crimea, foray into Eastern Ukraine, experiments with Western defined "hybrid warfare," and general standoff with the West have made Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine a topic of keen interest, but most analysis of the topic finds there is little of note in this new doctrine.¹ This essay argues that although there were relatively few changes from the 2010 to 2014 Military Doctrines, what changes were made are significant when considered in conjunction with contemporary Russian thought on the changing nature of warfare. Traditional thinking has viewed the primary threat to national sovereignty as an overt military invasion bringing regime change. Russia now believes that the primary threat of regime change comes not from military invasion, but from a new way that war is waged, by a combination of nonmilitary and military methods. Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine was drafted to deal with the implications of these perceptions.

Why is Russia's Military Doctrine important?

Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine can directly be attributed to the work of General Valeri Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff. In the Russian system, the Chief of the General Staff is the primary proponent of military doctrine, but this doctrine also provides guidance for Russia's militarized internal security services and intelligence services such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and Federal Security Service (FSB). This means that military doctrine in the Russian system has a greater impact, than that of military doctrine in most other countries whose military doctrine generally concerns only the Ministry of Defense/Department of Defense.

In general, Russia's military doctrine covers a far wider swath of territory than the military doctrines of most other countries, not only serving as a guidance document for Russia's Armed Forces and militarized security services, but also serving as a messenger of Russian intentions to the world.²

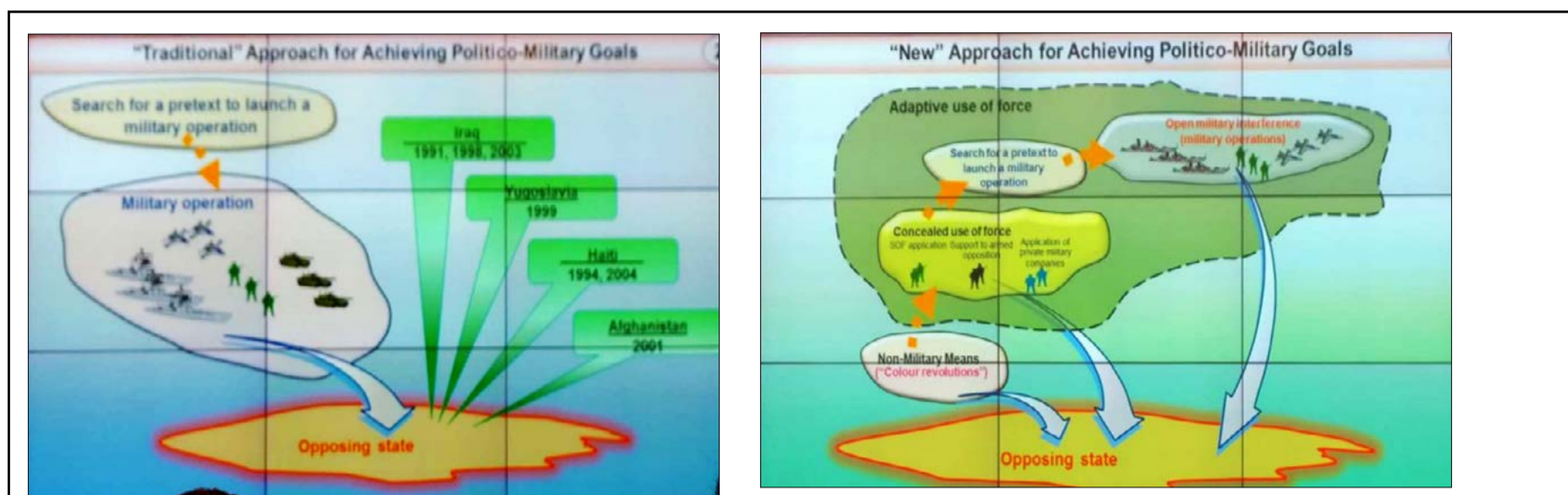
A new way of war, the seed of Russia's new doctrine

General Gerasimov alluded to the changes that would be made in 2014 Military Doctrine in an article he published February 26, 2013, in *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* [Military-Industrial Courier], "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations." In the article, General Gerasimov discusses a new theory of war that blends military and nonmilitary measures.³ (The idea of this new way of warfare has been around for years, but was best articulated by General Gerasimov) Gerasimov's theory was developed by observations of the West's new way of conducting war. This new way of war is predominately nonmilitary in nature by a ratio of 4:1. Instead of overt military invasions as in the First and Second World Wars, attacks are now instigated by the installment of political opposition through state propaganda (*CNN*, *BBC*, etc. in the Russian view), the internet/social media, and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In the Russian view, this is how warfare is started, than as the government struggles to maintain order, economic and political sanctions are imposed to tie the hands of the aggrieved governments and promote further dissent. As the security situation deteriorates, separatist movements can be stoked and strengthened, and undeclared special operations, conventional, and private military forces (defense contractors), can be introduced to battle the government and cause further havoc. Eventually, as the government collapses and anarchy results, military forces under the guise of peacekeepers can be employed to pacify the area if desired. This is the new theory of warfare in General Gerasimov's article, a theory derived from Russian observations of Kosovo, the "color revolutions" and the Arab Spring.⁴

This theory may sound farfetched to the Western ears, but it is common place in Russian security circles. This topic was the theme of the third Moscow Conference on International Security hosted by the Russian Ministry of Defense on May 23, 2014. The conference served as a prime venue for primarily Russian perspectives on global security.

Russian military officers now tied the term "Color Revolution" to the crisis in Ukraine and to what they saw as a new US and European approach to warfare that focuses on creating destabilizing revolutions in other states as a means of serving their security interests at low cost and with minimal casualties. It was seen as posing a potential threat to Russian in the near abroad, to China and Asia states not aligned with the US, and as a means of destabilizing states in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, and South Asia.⁵

Continued: The Significance of Changes in Russia's Military Doctrine



Pictures of third Moscow Conference on International Security slides depicting comparing the old and new ways of war. (Left) "Traditional" Approach for Acheiving Politico-Military Goals, (Right) "New" Approach for Acheiving Politico-Military Goals.

Source: http://csis.org/files/publication/140529_Russia_Color_Revolution_Full.pdf

The conference had several high profile briefers coming from the crème of the crop of the Russian security establishment including: Sergey Shoigu- Russian Defense Minister, General Gerasimov- Chief of the Russian General Staff, Sergey Lavrov- Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Colonel General Nikolay Borduzha- Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).⁶ The significance of this conference is that it shows that the theory that Gerasimov posited in his article is not simply a divergent theory that is only found in some elements of the General Staff, but is instead the prevalent theory throughout the Russian security establishment. Given Russia's new theory of how war is being conducted, the following minor changes in the Russian military doctrine seem much more significant.

2014 Military Doctrine provides means for the new forms and methods of warfare

Indirect and asymmetric methods - The 2014 Military Doctrine added some new verbiage that "indirect and asymmetric methods" will be a new characteristic of warfare. This phrase is borrowed verbatim from General Gerasimov's article, and is in reference to his theory that posits warfare will be conducted with a combination of military and nonmilitary measures. This new way of warfare requires new "indirect and asymmetric methods" for offense and defense. In order to implement these methods Russia is considering developing new means of force projection. Some of these new means involve using conventional military forces in new ways such as in an undeclared capacity ("polite people" or "little green men") or as peacekeepers. Other means are completely new in modern Russia including: a Special Operations Forces Command, Cossacks, private military companies, foreign legionnaires, and even one biker gang.⁷ Arguably, most changes found in Russia's new doctrine can in some way be related to the view of "indirect and asymmetric methods" that General Gerasimov believes will be a factor in current and future wars.



Putin with Russian Biker Leader Alexander "The Surgeon" Zaldostanov. Source: http://www.gazeta.ru/comments/2015/01/16_e_6377793.shtml

Non-nuclear deterrence - Russia's approach to nuclear deterrence has not changed. Russia's nuclear weapons are still intended for defensive purposes to protect her and her allies against nuclear and conventional attack. Russia is even investing in a slew of new nuclear missile technologies to modernize the force, and circumvent expected countermeasures such as anti-ballistic missile technologies. A strong nuclear deterrence capability will be a cornerstone of Russian security for the foreseeable future. What has changed is that Russia's new theory of warfare portends that the most likely way war will waged against Russia is not by a large scale conventional invasion or by nuclear means, but instead by an assortment of indirect and asymmetric methods that nuclear means will not deter. Although nuclear deterrence capabilities

Continued: The Significance of Changes in Russia's Military Doctrine

are still important, Russia is now shifting resources to meet this far more likely threat. Russia is modernizing her conventional forces through the addition of vast amounts of new planes, ships, vehicles, equipment. These means are seen as necessary to deal with small regional conflicts, militant separatists, and peacekeeping.

Mobilization reform - Reforming the mass mobilization system may seem an odd priority in the very same military doctrine that sees Russia's threats as primarily stemming from indirect and asymmetric methods, but this is the case. Russia believes there is a role for mobilized reservists in this new form of warfare, but this role differs significantly from how reservists have been utilized in the past. In Soviet times, doctrine dictated maintaining only a large strategic reserve that could be mobilized in the event of large-scale warfare. Current Russian thinking on the issue has changed in the last few years. Russia still maintains a system for large-scale mobilization, but is now experimenting with different ways of forming an operational reserve. One such way is through the creation of territorial-defense battalions (BTOs). These units are not intended to backfill active duty units, as reservists did in the Soviet era, but form stand-alone light infantry units suitable for facility and rear area defense, and possibly counter partisan operations. Reforming the mobilization system in this manner is a prudent way of maintaining a scalable capability for guarding the rear in a new way of warfare where fronts and boundaries have little meaning.⁸

Information space – Russia's new doctrine makes several mentions of the information space, and even discusses information in terms of "threat," as information can disseminate foreign values and be used to undermine historical, spiritual, and patriotic traditions. The emphasis on information and information warfare comes as no surprise, as it is seen as an essential in Gerasimov's new theory of war. Information warfare capabilities can promote and vilify as needed to shape public opinion at home and abroad through traditional mass communications (television, newspapers, radio, etc.), and through more (newer) personal methods, such as social media. On the mass communications front, Russia has deployed *RT.com* as a countermeasure to "hostile" foreign ran media outlets such as the *BBC* and *CNN*. On a more personal level, Russia has reportedly engaged the services of professional bloggers to promote Russian government viewpoints and shape perceptions. Russian information warfare capabilities will grow substantially in both nonmilitary and military capacities, as there have already been some calls for the establishment of "information troops" in the Russian Armed Forces. The development of information warfare capabilities to gain superiority in the information space is one of the most interesting implications of General Gerasimov's theory of war that is being addressed in Russia's new doctrine.⁹

Threat of externally funded and run political forces and social movements - The mention of the threat of foreign funded political forces and social movements in the new doctrine is in line with recent trends of Russian government action. Russia has made no secret of its belief that the cause of much of the world's instability (color revolutions, Arab Spring, The Maidan movement) has been instigated through foreign funded political movements and NGOs.

In the years following the cold war, some autocratic governments saw welcoming foreign support and cash for NGOs as an easy way to win favour with America and its allies. But the role played in Ukraine's 2004 Orange revolution by NGOs, including some that had received money from the Open Society Institute, which was founded by George Soros, an American billionaire, led to a change in attitude. The next year Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, declared that "public organisations" could not receive foreign assistance; by 2012 NGOs that received money from abroad and engaged in "political activities", broadly defined, had to register as "foreign agents", a phrase that comes close to implying espionage.¹⁰

Russia is countering this asymmetric threat in several ways. Russian law has clamped down on the foreign funding of NGOs and has enacted a rigid registration program. Russia is also developing her own, unique, response to these types of movements. One lesson that Russia has learned is that a government's crackdown on foreign-sponsored protestors/subversives (in the spirit of the color revolutions and Arab Spring) is often a pretext for the imposition of political and economic sanctions by the West. Russia's counter to this gambit is through the development of its own pro-government NGOs that can be brought to the streets to counter foreign sponsored protests, thus avoiding the appearance of a heavy-handed security state. One such group that has formed is the "Antimaidan movement." It is a diverse coalition of pro-government activists committed to using similar tactics as the organizations they oppose.¹¹ In terms of offensive operations, the "weaponization" of NGOs will likely cause Russia to sponsor or form Russian-favorable NGOs in foreign countries in order to use the same tactics that she has perceived that have been used against her.¹²



AntiMaidan NGO graphic. Source: http://vk.com/wall-41232698_964130

Continued: The Significance of Changes in Russia's Military Doctrine

Other notable changes in Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine

Inclusion of references to the Arctic - The arctic has long been of keen interest to the Soviets/Russians, but this interest has primarily been for the sole sake of security (nuclear deterrence infrastructure). In the last several years, this has begun to change. Russia's interests in the Arctic can now be attributed to opportunities for trans-Arctic shipping and fossil fuel exploitation. In order to further these interests, Russia has made great efforts to increase its conventional military presence to bolster Russian claims to disputed territories in the region. This increase in presence has been accomplished by more frequent naval patrols, the refurbishment of existing, and construction of new military facilities, and the basing of new military units, including the establishment of two arctic Motorized Rifle Brigades. In addition, other Russian military units are making more frequent visits to the region including the Russian Airborne and various Air Force units. These activities culminated in January 2015, with the activation of a new Strategic Command (OSK) for command and control of units in the arctic.¹³

Improvement of NBC Troops - Weapons of Mass Destruction have long been a Russian security concern, but it does seem odd that the improvement (expansion) of Nuclear, Biological, And Chemical (NBC) Defense Troops was explicitly mentioned in the new doctrine, at a time when other armies are reevaluating the role of NBC troops in their militaries. Russia's creation or reconstitution of at least four NBC Defense regiments may be related to the role these units have in urban warfare. The NBC Defense Troops are the sole operators of most thermobaric (fuel-air) weapons in the Russian arsenal; these weapons have proven extremely useful for Russia in urban warfare. As Russia experiments with "new forms and methods" of war, urban warfare will likely continue to be a high priority for development, and so will Russia's NBC Defense Troops.¹⁴

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) - Unsurprisingly, NATO was mentioned several times in the new doctrine, including a reference to NATO's "violation of rules of international law." The Russian Federation has long been miffed about the eastward NATO expansion. This resentment is due to a running dispute between Russia and the West about the fact if there were promises made at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union not to expand NATO eastward. The truth regarding this issue is well beyond the scope of this essay, but it can be safely stated that this issue remains a thorn in Russia's side. It can be argued that the primary impetus for Russia's decision to occupy Crimea and destabilize Eastern Ukraine was a belief that the Maidan movement was a Western-sponsored coup intent on unseating the legitimate president, and installing a pro-Western NATO-leaning government. The Ukraine is strategically and symbolically important to Russia, and the idea of the Ukraine in NATO is unpalatable for Russia to say the least.

Prompt Global Strike - The inclusion of the U.S. "Prompt Global Strike" program into the doctrine was expected as the program has irked Russia since its inception. A U.S. capability to conduct a bomb or missile strike almost anywhere in the world in a short period concerns Russia due to the implications for Russia's nuclear deterrence capabilities. By some Russian estimates, up to 80% of Russia's nuclear arsenal could be destroyed without the use of any U.S. nuclear weapons. This capability along with the U.S.'s anti-ballistic missile defense system (also mentioned in the doctrine) could whittle away Russia's nuclear deterrent, a frightening prospect for Russia.¹⁵

Conclusion

For those following Russian security matters, there is nothing unexpected in Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine, but that does not mean it is of little importance. The few changes that were made are almost all directly related to a Russian perception of the new way of warfare. Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine is significant because it is the first doctrine that acknowledges Russia's primary threat to sovereignty comes not from an army or a missile strike, but from a mix of indirect and asymmetric threats including foreign sponsored: insurgencies, color revolutions, Arab Spring like scenarios, NGOs, and even information. The implication of Russia's theory of warfare, and hence this doctrine, is that Russian capability development will continue to veer away from large scale conventional warfare and mass mobilization, and increasingly emphasize the development of capabilities to counter asymmetric and indirect threats which Russia believes she is more likely to face. The means required to implement these capabilities will be as diverse and asymmetric as the threats they counter and could come in the form of: undeclared conventional forces, peacekeepers, special operators, Cossacks, private military companies, foreign legionnaires, biker gangs, Russian sponsored NGOs, and information warriors. The changes made to Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine lay out the path that the Russian security establishment has traveled in the last few years, and will travel in the future. Most importantly, Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine is another sign that planners should start tossing their Soviet era doctrinal templates, because Russia's order of battle is becoming much more diverse...

Continued: The Significance of Changes in Russia's Military Doctrine

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