per Concordiam

Journal of European Security and Defense Issues

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Disrupting a deadly homecoming

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GEORGE C. MARSHALL
EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES

Welcome to the 19th issue of *per Concordiam*. This issue focuses on the contemporary transnational terrorism threat posed by al-Qaida and related groups of violent extremists. In light of the rapid and unpredictable change taking place around the world and the alarming levels of violent extremism currently exhibited in parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, it is vital that we re-evaluate the global threat of terrorism. It is important to seek new ways to strengthen our efforts against those who try to undermine peace and stability in pursuit of misguided religious and political ideologies.

The past few years have been tumultuous indeed. The optimism that arose with the Arab Awakening has largely been replaced by a sense of apprehensive uncertainty as violent extremists have increased their strength and capacity in Syria and Iraq and have been recruiting globally. The result is an unprecedented threat to stability not only in Syria, but throughout the world as foreign fighters return home trained and willing to carry out acts of terror. The threat has become less predictable and more volatile as the conflict continues, with the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, now known as the Islamic State, splitting from al-Qaida, engaging in open warfare against rival jihadist groups and making unprecedented gains in Iraq. While groups such as al-Shabab in the Horn of Africa and Boko Haram in Nigeria appear to be growing in ambition, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) remain capable and extremely dangerous. Looking toward the future, the withdrawal of International Security Assistance Force from Afghanistan presents a new challenge that could affect many throughout the region and far beyond.

In keeping with the Marshall Center's mission to address current regional and transnational threats to security, including our commitment to strengthen international counterterrorism capabilities, we carefully consider these recent developments. In particular, these issues have helped shape the curriculum of our twice-yearly Program on Terrorism and Security Studies, where counterterrorism practitioners can share best practices and lessons learned as we strive to overcome current and future threats to peace and stability. In September 2014, the Marshall Center conducted a Senior Executive Seminar (SES) on adapting effective strategies and improving international cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The latest SES brought together more than 80 senior government officials from more than 50 countries to discuss this vital topic.

This edition of *per Concordiam* explores the issue of terrorism and counterterrorism, providing policymakers and practitioners a useful guide to one of the most pressing security concerns of our time. This issue includes a wide range of author perspectives, including several experts, alumni, and Marshall Center faculty whom we are proud to include in our ever-growing network.

As always, we welcome comments and perspective on these topics and will include your responses in future editions of the journal. Please feel free to contact us at editor@perconcordiam.org

Sincerely,

Keith W. Dayton
Director
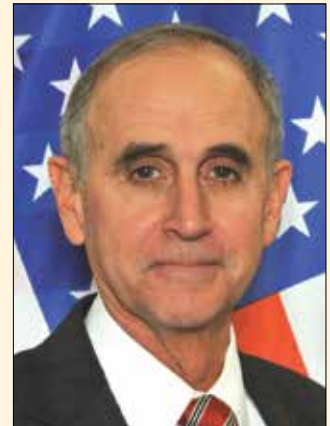
Keith W. Dayton
Director, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies

Keith W. Dayton retired as a Lieutenant General from the U.S. Army in late 2010 after more than 40 years of service. His last assignment on active duty was as U.S. Security Coordinator to Israel and the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem. An artillery officer by training, he also has served as politico-military staff officer for the Army in Washington, D.C., and U.S. defense attaché in Russia. He worked as director of the Iraqi Survey Group for Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq. He earned a Senior Service College Fellowship to Harvard University and served as the Senior Army Fellow on the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. Gen. Dayton has a bachelor's degree in history from the College of William and Mary, a master's degree in history from Cambridge University and another in international relations from the University of Southern California.

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THINKSTOCK

per Concordiam magazine addresses security issues relevant to Europe and Eurasia and aims to elicit thoughts and feedback from readers. We hope our previous issues accomplished this and helped stimulate debate and an exchange of ideas. Please continue to share your thoughts with us in the form of letters to the editor that will be published in this section. Please keep letters as brief as possible and specifically note the article, author and magazine edition to which you are referring. We reserve the right to edit all letters for language, civility, accuracy, brevity and clarity.

Send feedback via email to: editor@perconcordiam.org

EDITOR'S NOTE: Before June 2014 (when the articles for this edition of *per Concordiam* were being written) "The Islamic State" (IS) was known as "The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham" (ISIS), or alternatively as "The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL). The three acronyms (IS, ISIS and ISIL) refer to the same organization, headed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, also known as the "Caliph Ibrahim."

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

per Concordiam is a moderated journal with the best and most thoughtful articles and papers published each quarter. We welcome articles from readers on security and defense issues in Europe and Eurasia.

First, email your story idea to **editor@perconcordiam.org** in an outline form or as a short description. If we like the idea, we can offer feedback before you start writing. We accept articles as original contributions. If your article or similar version is under consideration by another publication or was published elsewhere, please tell us when submitting the article. If you have a manuscript to submit but are not sure it's right for the quarterly, email us to see if we're interested.

As you're writing your article, please remember:

- **Offer fresh ideas.** We are looking for articles with a unique perspective from the region. We likely will not publish articles on topics already heavily covered in other security and foreign policy journals.
- **Connect the dots.** We'll publish an article on a single country if the subject is relevant to the region or the world.
- **Do not assume a U.S. audience.** The vast majority of *per Concordiam* readers are from Europe and Eurasia. Our mission is to generate candid discussion of relevant security and defense topics, not to strictly reiterate U.S. foreign policy.

- **Steer clear of technical language.** Not everyone is a specialist in a certain field. Ideas should be accessible to the widest audience.
- **Provide original research or reporting to support your ideas.** And be prepared to document statements. We fact check everything we publish.
- **Copyrights.** Contributors will retain their copyrighted work. However, submitting an article or paper implies the author grants license to *per Concordiam* to publish the work.
- **Bio/photo.** When submitting your article, please include a short biography and a high-resolution digital photo of yourself of at least 300 dots per inch (DPI).

NUCLEO OPERATIVO CENTRALE DI SICUREZZA

CONTAINING

Extremism

By **DR. SANDRO MENICHELLI,** Justice and Home Affairs counselor at the Italian Permanent Mission to the European Union

THE EU ADOPTS JOINT MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE THREAT OF RETURNING FOREIGN FIGHTERS

In late May 2014, Mehdi Nemmouche, a native of France who is thought to have spent more than a year fighting in Syria with radical Islamists, walked into the Jewish Museum in Brussels and gunned down four people. This dreadful slaughter is the latest in a long list of events that show the threat foreign fighters present to Europe. The fighters are often young and, after leaving their European countries for combat zones — notably Syria — they return with military training and the intention of engaging in terrorist activities in the European Union, ready to act against anything that represents the West and its values.

Members of the Italian Police Special Forces detain a suspect during a European exercise called ATLAS in 2013. ATLAS brought together counterterrorism forces from 27 countries.

EPA

Spanish National Police in Malaga, Spain, detain one of six men and dismantle a terror cell responsible for sending jihadist fighters to Syria and other conflict zones in March 2014.

This is not a new phenomenon. Some young Muslims will play an active role in conflicts, such as presently in Syria, where they consider authentic Islam and its values to be in danger. A similar trend transpired in the 1980s and 1990s after conflicts in Algeria, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Young Muslims traveled to join what they perceived to be wars against the enemies of Islam represented by the Christian West, Jewish Zionists, impious Muslim rulers, corrupted *ulema* (Muslim religious intellectual elites), apostates and the religiously indifferent. Then they came back to Europe.

Foreign fighters remain a serious threat to Europe, and it is clear that this phenomenon is likely to persist in coming years. An effective and comprehensive response from the EU and its member states is needed. This requires a long-term commitment. Recent experience shows that effectively countering radicalization and recruitment requires a balanced approach between security-related measures and efforts to address the factors that may create an environment conducive to radicalization. In response, the EU has implemented specific initiatives within the framework of a revised strategy.

Reducing the flow of foreign fighters into Syria and intervening immediately upon their return is a challenge. But this is a key priority that can be

accomplished through joint efforts of European governments, law enforcement and intelligence agencies and civil society. The aim is to curb radicalization and recruitment while also following a deradicalization program. This means immediate action is required, as identified by the European Council in December 2013, in the areas of prevention, identification, travel detection, criminal justice response and cooperation with third countries.

To prevent radicalization, the flow of fighters to conflict areas must be reduced through the use of targeted campaigns and counternarrative material addressing the range of motivations encouraging young people to volunteer for combat abroad while exploiting all the possibilities offered by the European Commission's Radicalization Awareness Network. Of course, if the goal is to reduce the appeal of EU citizens becoming militants, these messages will have to be sensitive and tailored to different national and local contexts. In this area, cooperation among industry, government and civil society could play a key role. Each could share its unique views and experiences, and notably, develop a common response for detecting and countering early in the online radicalization process.

If, instead, our goal is to detect and identify those going abroad, the key challenges are information sharing, border security in countries surrounding Syria, and blocking terrorism financing. Effective collection and dissemination of information from member states is key for detecting suspicious round-trip travel. Available EU and international tools include the new generation of the Schengen Information System; the potential use of the Visa Information System for counterterrorism purposes; the databases of Interpol — notably the Stolen and Lost Travel Documents section; the new Focal Point called TRAVELLERS established in February 2013 by Europol within the Analytical Work File; the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program for following financial transactions; and the United Nations

PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO
TRACK VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

1. European Commission's Radicalization Awareness Network

2. Schengen Information System

3. Visa Information System

4. Stolen and Lost Travel Documents section of Interpol's database

5. Europol's TRAVELLERS focal point

6. Terrorist Finance Tracking Program

7. United Nations sanctions regime

8. EU Passenger Name Record

sanctions regime. Within this framework, the future EU Passenger Name Record, where all available data can be systematically checked against national and multinational watch lists, will add value.

EU member states are progressively learning through experience, investigating and prosecuting foreign fighters before their departure to, or after their return from, Syria. It is absolutely necessary to make full use of Eurojust, an EU agency dealing with judicial cooperation in criminal matters, to ensure a more effective coordination of investigations and prosecutions of foreign fighters. Joint investigation teams should also be established when appropriate.

Regarding cooperation with non-EU Mediterranean countries, EU diplomatic missions have increased their knowledge of this phenomenon and have allowed an in-depth exchange of analyses through years of political dialogue. Exploiting all of the possibilities offered by EU agencies, such as Frontex and Europol, complements these efforts by finalizing working arrangements with relevant third countries, keeping in mind that nations should focus on the routes fighters use to reach conflict zones. □

RUSSIA'S
WARY WATCH
ON THE EAST

RUSSIA AND NATO SHOULD PUT RIVALRIES ASIDE TO HELP STABILIZE CENTRAL ASIA

ISTOCK

BY DR. IGOR ZEVELEV,

director, Russia Office, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Moscow

Russian perspectives on counterterrorism in Central Asia[1] are shaped and forged by geopolitical perceptions of the region and transnational terrorism threats at large. Russia seeks to secure its role in the post-Soviet space, including Central Asia, as the regional leader in the development of counterterrorism strategies. Russia, while trying to define the goals of its counterterrorism policies in Central Asia, is not only seeking to counter transnational violent extremism and have a more secure neighborhood, but is also looking to increase influence and maintain hegemony in the region.

RUSSIA'S SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

The term "Central Asia" may be misleading in light of the political and economic heterogeneity of the region. Nonetheless, in the context of Russian foreign policy analysis, the category Central Asia is a legitimate and helpful construction because the Kremlin currently formulates its perceptions of, and policies for, this area as part of a coherent regional approach, with minor adjustments for closer economic cooperation with Kazakhstan and increased attention toward migration flows from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Several important conclusions can be drawn on

the role and representation of the region, both for Russia in a regional sense and for other nation states at large.

Moscow's vision of Central Asia has been informed by two interrelated narratives. First, the region is viewed by the Kremlin as an integral part of the post-Soviet space, a zone of Russia's special interests. The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by President Vladimir Putin on February 12, 2013, states that "priority areas of Russian foreign policy include the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] Member States, further strengthening of the CIS as a basis for enhancing regional interaction among its participants who not only share common historical background but also have great capacity for integration in various spheres."[2] The theme of a common Soviet legacy occupied a particularly important position in Moscow's perceptions of Central Asia in the wake of the Soviet collapse, in the early 1990s, but its importance has gradually diminished. Viewing the region through the lens of common history and shared culture is not as important today. Nevertheless, Russia's perceptions of the post-Soviet space differ greatly from those of the United States, the European Union or China. For Russia, Central Asia is seen as a region of very important neighbors rather than as a part of the general global arena.

Second, the region, whose borders with Russia are not well-guarded, is considered critical to all aspects of Russian security, including the increased activity of transnational radical groups, drug trafficking, organized crime, illegal migration, interethnic tensions and environmental challenges. Russia sees threats emanating from the region differently than do other nation-states. The U.S. National Strategy for Counterterrorism says that "the United States does not face a direct terrorist threat from Central Asia but has an interest in maintaining the security of the U.S. logistics infrastructure supporting operations in Afghanistan, key strategic facilities, and in preventing the emergence of an al-Qaida safe haven in Central Asia."[3] Russia is concerned with Central Asia not only because of hypothetical safe havens for international terrorists, but also because of economic integration projects, the plight of Russian and Russian-speaking populations, labor migration and home-grown radical Islamic trends.[4] Russia's sensitivity to Central Asia stems from both history and geographical proximity.

The Russian Foreign Policy Concept emphasizes the dual nature of security threats emanating from Afghanistan through Central Asia: Transnational terrorism and other dangers coexist with the threat of political destabilization of the region. According to the document, "Russia will build up cooperation with the CIS Member States in ensuring mutual security, including joint efforts to combat common challenges and threats, primarily international terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, transnational crime, and illegal migration. Priorities here are the neutralization of the above-mentioned threats coming from the territory of Afghanistan and the prevention of destabilization of the situation in Central Asia and Transcaucasia."[5]

According to a new narrative that has emerged in Russian security discourse since 2011, attempts at democratization in developing countries with no traditions of democratic rule lead to instability and to an increase in terrorism. The Arab Spring and the experiences of Libya and Syria in particular have been interpreted in Russia as a new wave of "colored revolutions" inspired by the West and leading to chaos. Many Russian experts viewed the Arab Spring as a plot orchestrated by the West. There is much concern in Moscow that the Arab Spring might spread to Central Asia and, potentially, to Russian regions with significant Muslim populations. Moscow is apprehensive that the rise of Islamism in the Middle East may resonate with Central Asian and Russian Muslim populations. Estimates of the number of Russian and Central Asian fighters taking part in the Syrian civil war vary from several hundred to 8,000 people.[6] The return of jihadi fighters to their homes in Central Asian states and Russia is viewed as a very real and immediate threat to national, regional and international security.

GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION

Central Asia is often perceived in Moscow as an arena of economic competition and a battleground for political influence among Russia, the U.S. and China. The three countries' relations encompass more than exchanges between influential and powerful states. These relations are characterized by a collision of self-definitions and of varying interpretations of other countries. This makes interactions on Central Asia among these three great powers particularly difficult. Many policymakers in Russia eye Washington with exceptional mistrust and hope for a Russia-China coalition to balance American power. Yet there is also a rising awareness of Russia's relative economic weakness vis-à-vis China and the risk of becoming a "junior partner" in the coalition.

The rivalry with the United States for political influence over Central Asia and a growing competition with China for economic dominance in the region affect Moscow's perspectives on counterterrorism. A shared history and significant societal ties between Russia and the Central Asian states provide Moscow with substantial leverage. Cooperation in the sphere of counterterrorism only strengthens Russian competitive advantages. However, Russian policymakers understand that they face serious geopolitical rivalry in Central Asia. Russia already perceived the former Soviet states as a ground of competition for influence and leadership in the mid-1990s, but American deployments in Central Asia in 2001 intensified unease about that development. This unease has had a lasting effect on Russian attitudes toward counterterrorism cooperation with the U.S. and Europe.

It is likely that Russian leadership was initially divided and generally apprehensive about the appearance of U.S. troops in Central Asian states in 2001; however, the Kremlin eventually consented. There are four possible reasons for the Kremlin's stance. First, the Russians saw that the U.S. was determined to do whatever it saw as necessary to fight terrorists in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks. This clearly included basing U.S. troops in Central Asia. Second, had Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, hosts an informal meeting of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in the Kremlin in May 2014. Joining Putin are, from left, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev and Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko. EPA

aspired to intervene, it had little leverage in Uzbekistan and few instruments to prevent the signing of the U.S.-Uzbek agreement on the base in Hanabad. Third, because Putin decided in 2001 to use the situation after 9/11 to radically improve relations with the U.S., his resistance to U.S. policies in Central Asia would have derailed this ambition. Fourth, Russia clearly shared an interest in the destruction of al-Qaida bases and the Taliban government. Moscow calculated that its fight against terrorists in Chechnya and on the Afghan-Tajik border would benefit greatly from a successful American operation in Afghanistan.

In spite of these considerations, the Russian decision to accept the U.S. military presence in Central Asia was difficult. Such acceptance was conditional on it being temporary and aimed solely at Afghan stabilization. Russia tried to show the world that the U.S. military presence in Central Asia had received a Russian stamp of approval. Then Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said in the spring of 2004: "After September 11, our president contacted the heads of several states and recommended that they should allow American bases to be stationed on their territories for the anti-terrorism operation in Afghanistan. We understand that they will remain there for the entire period, and that this may be of a long-term nature."[7]

However, by 2004 it became evident that the American presence might last longer than the situation in Afghanistan required. Then, First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov admitted: "The context is clear: an anti-Taliban operation is carried out there. We are proceeding from what the Americans are telling us – 'we'll leave when it ends.' They won't."[8] Trubnikov also explained why Russia opposes a longer presence: "I think the presence of states other than those comprising the region doesn't suit us, no matter whether it is the U.S.A. or China. This is a sphere of our vital interests. There's a limit."[9]

Overall, Russian attitudes toward the 2001-2014 U.S. military presence in Central Asia were determined not only by counterterrorism considerations, but also by a deep sense of rivalry with the U.S. and NATO. This attitude was evident when Moscow spent much of its political and economic leverage to persuade Kyrgyzstan to revoke U.S. basing rights at Manas air base in 2009. Manas had been used since 2001 as a NATO transit base and was the most important transshipment and refueling point in support of U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan. The U.S. presented the base as enhancing security for all, emphasizing that deployments in Central Asia, and Manas in particular, were essential for fighting transnational terrorism that threatens Russian, Central Asian and American security. Michael McFaul, then the U.S. National Security Council senior director on Russian and Eurasian affairs, characterized Manas as "a win/win/win" for the United States, Kyrgyzstan and Russia,[10] but Moscow disagreed. After intense political bargaining and maneuvering, then-Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev agreed in 2009 to continue cooperating with the U.S., but the base was renamed the Manas Transit Center. In 2014, all soldiers vacated this main hub for U.S. operations in Afghanistan after the Kyrgyz government declined to extend the lease. Russia has its own air base 30 kilometers from Manas, near the city of Kant. The American departure tipped the balance of influence in Central Asia in Russia's and China's favor.

COUNTERTERRORISM PRIORITIES

Moscow's vision of Central Asia as part of its neighborhood, where Russia must play the leading role, influenced the choice of counterterrorism instruments and formats. Russian counterterrorism policies share similarities and differences with those of Americans and Europeans. How, why, and by whom is something established as a security threat in a given country? What are the best strategies to counter terrorist threats? These are always political choices, not preordained realities. Different political actors may conceptualize national security in various ways and use

European Space Agency astronaut Alexander Gerst of Germany, from left, Russian cosmonaut Maxim Suraev and U.S. astronaut Reid Wiseman join hands at the Gagarin Cosmonauts' Training Centre in May 2014. The United States and Russia cooperate in space despite troubled relations over Ukraine.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

these concepts differently in various forms of discourse. They may have different views on major security threats, security policy aims and instruments.

From the Russian perspective, the major security threats in Central Asia include not only al-Qaida and similar groups with global ambitions, but also local Islamic forces that seek to create alternative forms of government in the region.[11] This is partly a reflection of the Russian government's suspicions of civil society in general, both at home and abroad. Russia places more emphasis on strengthening Central Asian governments' capacity to combat terrorist threats and less on their ability to win hearts and minds. Moscow is more interested in supporting existing regimes than in strengthening institutions and civil society.[12] This may lead to a failure to make a clear distinction between terrorists and legitimate political opposition or nonviolent religious activity.

Concrete Russian counterterrorist polices in Central Asia include three major elements. First, Moscow assists the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to increase counterterrorist capabilities by providing training, arms and financing to security services and armed forces. Second, Russia deploys its own armed forces in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to help protect borders and increase rapid reaction capabilities. Third, Moscow contributes to international counterterrorist cooperation in Central Asia through multilateral bodies and regional organizations, such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Russia has supported the creation of the CSTO Rapid Reaction Force, the adoption of the Convention against Terrorism by the SCO, creation of the CIS Anti-Terrorism Center and its program of action for 2011-2013 on combating terrorism, establishment of the Regional Counter Terrorism Structure (RCTS, formerly known as RATS) by the SCO, and adoption of a Joint Plan of Action on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the CSTO Security Council.

Agreements to restrict nonmember states from having bases in CSTO member nations have given Russia the potential to limit foreign powers from gaining a military foothold in Central Asia. However, though its role in the CSTO might seem to give Russia the ability to dominate the region, the reality is somewhat different: A member state can leave the organization when it no longer is of benefit or suspend its membership, as Uzbekistan did in 2012.[13]

International cooperation is absolutely essential to reduce the risk of terrorism and other forms of violence in Central Asia by helping to compensate for deficiencies within local security sectors. It is particularly important in view of the upcoming challenges to the region that include NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, the return home of Central Asian foreign fighters from Afghanistan, and potential political instability associated with leadership succession in several Central Asian countries.

One of the most striking features of American-Russian interactions in 2001-2002 was the significant, though not complete, congruence of perceptions of terrorism and the war against it. Not only the elites, but the general public in the two countries, saw terrorism as a major threat. Throughout the 2000s, it became evident that Russia and the U.S. were not trying to make counterterrorism the foundation of a positive bilateral relationship. By 2014, the two countries had yet to agree on what political, religious and social factors further terrorism.[14] However, the national interests of Russia and the U.S. do not collide in Central Asia. If the two powers stop viewing each other's respective counterterrorism polices in Central Asia as attempts to weaken the other side's position, the key obstacle to international cooperation in the area will be removed. ◻

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Al-Qaida
Expands its Reach

The terrorist group remains relevant by using affiliates

By Robin Simcox,
research fellow, Henry Jackson Society, London

REUTERS

Chiroma Maina, right, holds a picture of her abducted daughter, Comfort Amos, while sitting next to her husband, Jonah, and her daughter Helen at their home in Maiduguri, Nigeria, in May 2014. Comfort Amos was abducted by Boko Haram militants along with more than 200 of her secondary school classmates.

Assessing al-Qaida's health is not easy. On one hand, the United States' drones regularly kill al-Qaida's leaders, and the group has not pulled off a successful attack in the West since the London bombings of July 2005. On the other hand, al-Qaida controls territory across the Middle East and Africa and still has a significant presence in the world.

It can be equally difficult to define how exactly the group operates.[1] As the American Enterprise Institute's Katherine Zimmerman recently wrote, al-Qaida "relies on secrecy to survive. Even al-Qaida members are confused about each other's status. … The covert nature of the network intentionally obscures many relationships."[2] Therefore, analyzing how al-Qaida

operates is not only a challenge for the intelligence community and policymakers, it is also a challenge for group members themselves.

The conventional thinking in government circles is that the al-Qaida network consists of several different layers. At the top is the group's "core,"[3] the senior leadership based in Afghanistan and/or Pakistan and led by Ayman al-Zawahri, al-Qaida's emir and Osama bin Laden's successor.

Beyond this core are al-Qaida's affiliates, formally integrated into the network that now exists: al-Shabab in Somalia, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen, al-Nusrah Front (ANF) in Syria, and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in the

African Sahel. Leaders of these groups have publicly sworn loyalty to al-Qaida's emir and had this oath of loyalty recognized and accepted in turn. Assessing how far al-Qaida's network runs beyond these affiliates, and how active it is in countries such as Tunisia and Libya, requires additional exploration.

This article examines these questions and concludes that three factors have been key in ensuring why al-Qaida's threat endures: its decentralization and the rise of the regional affiliates that has accompanied this, the ongoing crisis in Syria, and the power of the group's ideology.

THE FALL OF THE CORE
A recent change within al-Qaida's

operating structure has brought into question previously held assumptions of the usefulness of using al-Qaida's core to understand how the group operates.

In 2013, AQAP emir Nasir al-Wuhayshi, a former bin Laden aide now based in Yemen, was promoted to the role of al-Qaida's "general manager" by al-Zawahri.[4] This was the first time that al-Qaida promoted a leader from a regional affiliate to such a senior role, rather than from within the group's core leadership. This led a recent Foreign & Commonwealth Office paper to proclaim that the " 'AQ Core' is no more." Al-Wuhayshi's promotion showed that "Af/Pak based AQ figures … do not necessarily have a higher standing than any of the other AQ groups."[5] Similarly, analysts such as the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' Thomas Joscelyn have long argued that it "does not make sense to draw a firm line between al Qaeda's 'core,' which is imprecisely defined, and the affiliates. … And al Qaeda has dispatched 'core' members around the globe."[6]

Al-Qaida diminished the relevance of its "core" when al-Zawahri reduced his role. While he remains the group's emir, the business intelligence group Five Dimensions Consultants learned that, at the beginning of 2014, al-Zawahri "relinquished operational leadership" to al-Wuhayshi "to avoid criticism of not being an effective leader."[7] Clearly, al-Zawahri finds it difficult to communicate effectively with the rest of his network, leading to an even greater decentralization within al-Qaida. This is an understandable move, yet it reduces al-Zawahri's overall control of the network and his relevance within it.

Therefore, in understanding al-Qaida's overall threat, our analysis should focus on groups outside of the core.

AFFILIATE GROUPS

Al-Qaida affiliate groups have a great deal of operational autonomy and consist primarily of local membership.[8] Their activities can include bombing operations, assassinations of government officials, kidnappings and basic governance of territory that

they control. They also allow al-Qaida a geographic reach it did not possess before 9/11. A brief overview of these affiliates follows.

Yemen: AQAP's existence was formally announced in January 2009 following a merger between al-Qaida's Yemeni and Saudi branches. AQAP focuses on hollowing out the Yemeni state's strength by regularly assassinating intelligence and military officials. John Brennan, director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, has called AQAP "very, very dangerous" and al-Qaida's "most active operational franchise."[9]

AQAP has attempted to attack Western aviation at least three times. Most notoriously, in December 2009, a Nigerian AQAP recruit, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, attempted to detonate a bomb concealed in his underwear while flying from Amsterdam to Detroit. In October 2010, the group concealed bombs in printer cartridges inside U.S.-bound cargo planes during stopovers in the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. Finally, in April 2012, AQAP planned to use another underwear bomb on a flight destined for the U.S. and was thwarted by a Saudi spy who had infiltrated the group.

However, AQAP's strength does not lie solely in terrorist attacks. During the revolution in Yemen, in the spring of 2011, AQAP's insurgency arm, Ansar al-Sharia, gained and then controlled territory in the provinces of Abyan and Shabwa, south Yemen. Ansar al-Sharia declared them Islamic "emirates" and provided a form of governance.[10] This territory was held until a state counteroffensive in the summer of 2012. Therefore, AQAP's threat is multi-pronged. While its wishes to govern all of Yemen may be far-fetched, that is very clearly its ambition.

Somalia: Al-Shabab was formerly part of the Islamic Courts Union, a group of Shariah courts operating in Somalia. Following the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in December 2006, al-Shabab emerged as an independent organization. Despite multiple declarations of loyalty from al-Shabab toward al-Qaida, it was not until

February 2012 that these links were formalized.[11]

Somali forces have had some success in expelling al-Shabab from territory it formerly controlled in Somalia, but the group is still an effective insurgent fighting force that easily recruits new followers.

In terms of its threat to the region and the West more broadly, there is a consistent tension within al-Shabab between those more focused on nationalist, Somali-specific issues and those concerned with global jihad. Al-Shabab's apparent involvement in the Westgate Shopping Mall attack in Kenya suggests that there is certainly an increasingly regional component to its threat. It also recently released a propaganda video calling for Westerners to carry out "lone wolf" suicide attacks in their home countries, although such al-Shabab attempts in the past have been unsuccessful.[12]

Al-Shabab may now be attempting to acquire chemical weapons. Mahdi Hashi, a Briton who recently had his citizenship revoked and is now facing terrorism charges in the U.S., is believed to have "substantial knowledge regarding an al-Shabab research and development department that was developing chemical weapons."[13]

The Sahel: AQIM is the latest manifestation of the Armed Islamic Group and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), two Algerian terrorist groups. The GSPC aligned itself with al-Qaida's global jihadist aims, and al-Zawahri acknowledged their integration into the al-Qaida network in a video released in September 2006.[14]

AQIM operates throughout North Africa's Sahel and Sahara regions, particularly in the mountainous regions of northern Mali, Algeria and parts of southern Libya. The group carries out military actions, including suicide bombings, and replenishes its resources via drug smuggling and kidnappings for ransom.

Syria: The ANF, a group created in the summer of 2011 as the country descended into civil war, represents

al-Qaida in Syria. It is one of the most effective rebel groups and boasts significant manpower, with an estimated 6,000 to 10,000 fighters.[15]

The ANF has carried out a string of car bombings and suicide attacks and established basic administration and provision of services in areas that it controls. It has seized oil fields in eastern Syria, although the control of these is under threat from fellow rebel groups, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS).[16]

The ongoing violence in Syria has provided fresh opportunities for al-Qaida to attack the West and has provided an enormous boost to the overall jihadist movement. The number of foreign fighters there is higher than in any other jihadist conflict zone since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.[17] There could be as many as 2,000 Western recruits in Syria, according to a December 2013 analysis from the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation.[18] Although operations focus on attacking Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces, the war has provided a large pool of potential volunteers for attacks on Western targets. The British security service has already outlined such concerns, stating that:

"Foreign fighters can gain combat experience, access to training and a network of overseas extremist contacts. The skills, contacts and status acquired overseas can make these individuals a much greater threat when they return to the UK, even if they have not been tasked directly to carry out an attack on their return. Experience of fighting overseas with terrorist groups can also promote radicalisation."[19]

A CHALLENGER TO THE THRONE?

While al-Qaida has been largely successful in taking in new affiliates since 9/11, it has consistently failed to rein in one of them — its representative in Iraq, ISIS (formerly known as al-Qaida in Iraq, the Mujahideen Shura Council and the Islamic State of Iraq).

In April 2013, ISIS emir Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi claimed that the ANF was just a component of the ISI (as it was

A Syrian rescue worker aids a man following an airstrike in Aleppo in June 2014. Al-Qaida affiliates have been active in a civil war that has killed more than 162,000 people since March 2011. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

then known) and that his group would be changing its name to ISIS to reflect its active role in the Syrian conflict. When ANF emir Abu Mohammad al-Jolani objected, al-Zawahri told al-Baghdadi that his group should focus only on Iraq. Al-Baghdadi refused.[20]

This was not the first time there had been tension between al-Qaida's senior leadership and their Iraqi representative. Bin Laden and al-Zawahri had previously been critical of the indiscriminate nature of terrorist attacks by ISIS' precursor groups, which were known to have ignored their guidance. Relations deteriorated to the extent that al-Qaida expelled ISIS from the network in early 2014.[21]

ISIS is now attempting to usurp al-Qaida's place as the pre-eminent jihadi group. ISIS has criticised al-Zawahri's leadership,[22] and according to Five Dimensions Consultants, al-Baghdadi sent a letter to several jihadi groups asking that they pledge allegiance to him rather than al-Zawahri. Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, Egypt's al-Qaida-inspired militant organization, has already agreed to do so,[23] and a recent ISIS cell arrested in Saudi Arabia were former AQAP fighters who had abandoned the group in favor of al-Baghdadi's.[24] AQAP member Maamoun Hatem also expressed public

support for ISIS.[25] Yet despite this, the al-Qaida affiliates that have issued official public statements on this issue have so far all backed al-Zawahri's leadership.

The formation of a jihadist group that is more theologically extreme than al-Qaida is not a complete surprise. Bin Laden survived an assassination attempt in Sudan in 1994 carried out by those who did not regard him as adequately Islamic, and documents discovered in his Abbottabad compound showed him to be critical of jihadists he regarded as too extreme.[26] Yet time will tell whether ISIS's rise will displace al-Qaida at the head of the violent jihadist movement. Certainly, its success in gaining control over large amounts of territory in Iraq in June 2014 make it a credible challenger.

THE BROADER AL-QAIDA NETWORK

Al-Qaida has ties to several networks across the Middle East and Africa. Some of these may be formal affiliates not publicly acknowledged by al-Zawahri — an attempt to avoid international pressure or prevent these groups from alienating domestic audiences they are attempting to cultivate.

Iran: One of the more surprising

Iraqi security forces arrest suspected militants of the violent extremist group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant during a raid and weapons search operation in Hawija in April 2014. The operation resulted in arrests and the seizure of weapons and ammunition. REUTERS

networks that al-Qaida has operated is in a country that is traditionally regarded as an enemy: Iran. A network of low-to-middle level al-Qaida fixers — personnel who serve as travel agents and financial intermediaries for al-Qaida operatives – operates in Zahedan, a city in eastern Iran near the borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan.[27] The U.S. Treasury regards Iran as a "critical transit point" for al-Qaida's activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan, with this network also sending funds and fighters to Syria.[28]

There is also a connection between al-Qaida in Iran and a possible attack in the West. Chiheb Esseghaier, accused by the Canadian government of plotting to derail a passenger train traveling between Canada and the U.S., is suspected of receiving direction and guidance from al-Qaida "elements" based in Zahedan.[29]

However, a host of al-Qaida figures departed Iran in early 2014, suggesting that this network could now be dispersing.[30]

The Sahel: Al-Qaida's influence in the Sahel extends beyond AQIM. Ansar al-Dine (AAD), for example, was financed by al-Qaida,[31] while the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) is an AQIM splinter group.[32] Mokhtar Belmokhtar, formerly one of AQIM's top commanders, also formed his own group, the Signed in Blood Battalion. This group took over a gas plant near In Amenas, Algeria, killing 39 people and holding 800 workers hostage in January 2014. Despite an earlier split from AQIM,[33] Belmokhtar still claimed the In Amenas operation was conducted in al-Qaida's name.[34]

In August 2013, MUJAO and the Signed in Blood Battalion merged, taking the name al-Murabitoun. This group is designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. government, which describes it as "the greatest near-term threat to U.S. and Western interests in the Sahel."[35] In April 2014, the SITE Intelligence Group reported that Belmokhtar pledged his group's allegiance to al-Zawahri, as opposed to ISIS.[36]

Al-Qaida is also active in increasingly ungoverned Libya and instructs its followers to gather weapons and run training camps.[37] This presence mainly comes via AQAP, AQIM and related individuals.[38]

The Ansar Al-Sharias, Tunisia and Libya: The Tunisian group, Ansar al-Sharia, is closely tied to al-Qaida. Its leader, Seifallah ben Hassine, is connected to senior al-Qaida figures,[39] and helped establish the jihadist Tunisian Combat Group.[40] Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia was designated a terrorist group by the U.S. State Department in January 2014, which described it as "ideologically aligned with al-Qaida and tied to its affiliates, including AQIM."[41] Ansar al-Sharia chapters also operate in the Libyan cities of Darnah and Benghazi.

The State Department recently described all Ansar al-Sharia groups operating in Libya and Tunisia as sharing "some aspects of AQ ideology, but are not formal affiliates and generally maintain a local focus."[42] However, these ties may be closer than the State Department suspects. For example, the Tunisian government claims that al-Qaida funds the Tunisian branch of Ansar al-Sharia.[43]

Nigeria: Al-Qaida's main connections to Nigeria are through Boko Haram, a group that has killed thousands in Nigeria and was designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. in November 2013.[44] Boko Haram leaders have had contact with the upper echelons of al-Qaida, possibly including Osama bin Laden.[45] Furthermore, in 2002, bin Laden dispatched one of his aides to Nigeria to distribute $3 million to sympathetic Salafist groups. Among the recipients was Mohammed Yusuf, Boko Haram's founder.[46]

The U.S. government suspects "communications, training, and weapons links" between Boko Haram, AQAP, al-Shabab and AQIM.[47] The AQIM/Boko Haram collaboration "is a mature relationship that allows Boko Haram an avenue to advance its capability, and gives AQIM influence over a developing al Qaeda affiliate and a rich target list," a U.S. House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee report stated. It also allows AQIM to expand into Nigeria.[48]

Boko Haram is tied to other parts of al-Qaida's broader network. According to the United Nations, "a number of Boko Haram members fought alongside al Qaeda affiliated groups in Mali in 2012 and 2013 before

A man walks away from Somalia's parliament building in Mogadishu after it was bombed by al-Qaida militant group al-Shabab, killing four people in May 2014. REUTERS

returning to Nigeria with terrorist expertise."[49] For example, AAD hosted hundreds of members of Boko Haram in territory it used to control in Mali,[50] while the Nigerian group is also thought to have trained with — and assisted in operations alongside — MUJAO.[51]

Furthermore, more than 30 members of Boko Haram trained in Afghanistan, with at least one receiving this training from al-Qaida.[52]

Sinai Peninsula: In the summer of 2011, one U.S. official commented that there was "no longer any doubt that al Qaeda had some kind of potent presence" in the Sinai Peninsula.[53] While a group calling itself al-Qaida in the Sinai Peninsula claimed to be operating there briefly that year, in reality, al-Qaida's activities are more likely tied to the Muhammad Jamal Network (MJN), which operates in North Sinai.

Jamal is a jihadist tied to AQIM,[54] al-Zawahri[55] and the group he formerly headed, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad.[56] Jamal also has connections to the upper echelons of AQAP's leadership, including emir Nasir al-Wuhayshi and military chief Qasim al-Raymi,[57] and the MJN network has been funded by AQAP.[58]

Despite Jamal's November 2012 arrest, his network continues to operate.[59]

North Caucasus: Emarat Kavkaz, or the "Caucasus Emirate," is a terrorist organization affiliated with al-Qaida that emerged in 2004 and operates in the North Caucasus. Al-Qaida's representative in Chechnya, Abu Hafs al-Urduni, said that the group's leader, Doku Umarov, would run the jihadist movement there.[60] Following Umarov's death in March 2014, Aliaskhab Kebekov, a respected jihadist theologian, assumed leadership.[61]

Emarat Kavkaz has carried out bomb attacks in Russia, including the March 2010 Moscow Metro suicide bombings and the January 2011 Moscow Airport bombing. In July 2011, the UN listed Emarat Kavkaz as an al-Qaida associated group.[62] The group is also tied to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which was funded by bin Laden and led by al-Qaida figures.[63]

CONCLUSION

Al-Qaida's network — of which this article provides only a snapshot — is wide ranging and goes beyond that of its formal affiliate groups. U.S. President Barack Obama has downplayed the danger that some of the groups pose to the West. Obama recently stated, "I think there is a distinction between the capacity and reach of a bin Laden and a network that is actively planning major terrorist plots against the homeland versus jihadists who are engaged in various local power struggles and disputes, often sectarian."[64] Some al-Qaida-aligned groups may be prioritizing local jihad over global, but lack of capacity should not be confused with lack of intent. It is unlikely that they are passing up available chances to strike against U.S. interests.

The U.S.'s record of eliminating al-Qaida's key personnel is impressive and has contributed to its inability to carry out attacks in the West. Yet despite the death or capture of so many of its members, al-Qaida's ability to replenish its ranks is impressive.

Furthermore, the international community's success in dismantling the ideology that allows al-Qaida to recruit new followers has been limited. For example, al-Qaida-inspired ideology has been disseminated throughout the West in recent years. Small, hard-to-detect cells inspired by the group — yet not receiving direct instruction from it — struck both London and Boston in 2013.

Until al-Qaida's ideology is comprehensively dismantled theologically, socio-economic conditions improve in the countries where al-Qaida recruits, and images of Muslim suffering in conflicts such as Syria no longer proliferate, the group will remain relevant. Clearly, these huge tasks may take generations to accomplish. For these reasons, policymakers should expect the al-Qaida threat to endure. □

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EADLY
TOOLS OF
TERROR

Can contemporary jihadists use CBRN weapons for terrorism?

By **ALEXANDER DETERT,** Marshall Center alumnus

An increase in violent Islamist extremism can be observed, especially across North Africa and the Middle East. New terrorist groups were born out of conflicts related to the Arab Spring, and previously established groups have merged into larger networks. Some of these new jihadi groups, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), are known for their use of extreme violence to pursue their goals and are characterized by a younger membership more inspired to kill than to pray (Watts 2014, 1, 4). Some of these groups even engage in fierce competition with each other. This "new era for jihadism" (Lahoud and al-Ubaydi 2014, 6) means that it is necessary to look at old threats from new angles, such as the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons by terrorist organizations. Has jihadism changed to a degree that contemporary terrorist groups have overcome their "motivational constraints" (Dolnik 2008, 1) for pursuing CBRN related terrorism? A fresh perspective is needed. Previously reluctant jihadist groups could overcome their restraint in using CBRN weapons to gain media attention and prevail in competition with other terrorist organizations. They also might take advantage of changes in CBRN weapon availability, method of delivery and degree of complexity. We will examine the relevance of the CBRN terrorism threat with consideration for the three main aspects for a terrorist attack: intention, capability and opportunity (Forest 2012).

TERRORIST MOTIVATORS

Media attention

Terrorists use violence as a form of communication to influence their audience (Martin 1986, 1). Therefore, media attention is a central goal of many terrorist organizations (Walsh 2010, 8). Smaller terrorist incidents often fail to receive more than local or regional media coverage. Research shows that the media is most attracted to high casualty terror incidents, such as aircraft hijackings and attacks against targets associated with Western countries (Walsh 2010, 4). Conversely, attacks in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan are perceived as "normal" and receive less international media attention and public interest.

To maintain or regain media attention, terrorists "must heighten the threshold for the spectacular assault," (Martin 1986, 7) which helps to explain the tendency of "new terrorism" to focus on maximizing the number of victims by acting indiscriminately against civilian targets and by increasing the use of suicide attacks (Walsh 2010, 7). Compared to conventional terrorist tactics, CBRN attacks would provide the needed stimulus to attract media attention. Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are also regarded as "weapons of mass disruption" (Hoffer 2011, 107).

WMD use by terrorists is the highest threat to the security of the West and is its greatest fear (Auerswald 2006, 543), (Mowatt-Larssen 2011, 2). Therefore, it may be enough for terrorist organizations to simply threaten to use such weapons. For example, on December 24, 1998, Osama bin Laden stated in an interview with *Time* magazine that "acquiring weapons (WMD) for the defense of Muslims is a

religious duty," which got him the undivided attention of the global media and Western governments.

On November 7, 2001, bin Laden gained media attention by directly addressing the potential use of CBRN weapons by al-Qaida with the following statement: "I wish to declare that if America used chemical or nuclear weapons against us, then we may retort with chemical and nuclear weapons" (Mowatt-Larssen 2011, 18).

One could argue that the use of CBRN weapons would discredit a terrorist group, especially when people identify with the victims (Martin 1986, 2). But that fear explains the increased publicity of the spectacular assault. Intense media coverage and massive audiences would facilitate the spread of fear and increase "customer interest," enabling perpetrators to broadcast their message on an unprecedented scale (Walsh 2010, 6).

The "action-reaction" spiral of terrorist activity and media attention could be a strong motivator for jihadist groups to pursue CBRN strategies. It also creates a security dilemma. When the media cover terrorist incidents only marginally and condemn the perpetrators, which they frequently do, they also add incentive for the terrorists to increase the level of violence, including the possible use of CBRN weapons. On the other hand, when the media cover acts of terrorism extensively, they give terrorist organizations less reason to increase the level of violence but allow the perpetrators to use the publicity to influence their audience.

A desire to stand out amidst the steady flow of terrorism reporting is a strong potential motivator for contemporary jihadist organizations to use CBRN weapons.

Competition between jihadist organizations

When al-Qaida issued a statement on February 2, 2014, stating it had no connection to ISIS, it was a sign that the fight for the world's top position among the jihadist organizations had reached a new level of intensity (Lahoud and al-Ubaydi 2014, 1).

The first dispute between al-Qaida's central leadership and ISIS's forerunner, al-Qaida in Mesopotamia, started in 2005 after the Iraqi Sunni jihadists engaged in violence against the Shiite population. In 2006, most Iraqi Sunni jihadists merged into a group called the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). Since early 2012, ISI became gradually more engaged in the Syrian insurgency, and in April 2013, unilaterally declared a merger with the al-Qaida affiliated group Jabhat al-Nusrah (JN) and changed its name to ISIS.

JN leader Abu Saad al-Hadrami promptly rejected the merger, and al-Qaida's central leadership declared it invalid. In the summer of 2013, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, publically rebuked al-Qaida central leader Ayman al-Zawahri (Watts 2014, 3). Al-Zawahri, realizing that he was rapidly losing influence in Iraq and Syria, started mediations between JN and ISIS in an attempt to regain control in the region. He selected Abu Khalid al-Suri, the leader of Syria's third-largest jihadist group and al-Qaida affiliated group Ahrar al-Sham, as his arbitrator. However, in early spring 2014, ISIS made its position clear by killing al-Hadrami, as well as Abu Khalid

(Lahoud and al-Ubaydi 2014, 2-4), (Watts 2014, 2).

At this point, Al-Zawahri confronted ISIS. He publicly disowned ISIS by leaking a letter to Al-Jazeera media and then denounced the group through clerics loyal to al-Qaida. In February 2014, al-Zawahri published a statement declaring: Al Qaida "has no connection with the 'group' called the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant." (Lahoud and al-Ubaydi 2014, 1) Following this declaration, al-Qaida used its affiliates JN and Ahrar al-Sham to engage ISIS units in Syria. What might seem a small regional dispute between two jihadist groups is really the beginning of a war between the two most influential Sunni jihadist groups in existence. Ultimately, "Ayman al-Zawahri seems to have overestimated his degree of influence," Nelly Lahoud and Muhammad al-Ubaydi of the Combating Terrorism Center wrote in March 2014. He not only struggles to maintain his influence in the Syrian and Iraqi insurgencies and to keep the money flowing in from Gulf donors, but also to keep al-Qaida's leadership role in global Jihad (Watts 2014).

Al-Qaida's fear of losing global influence and credibility among jihadist followers, supporters and affiliated groups like al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, which are already favoring ISIS (Watts 2014), could be regarded as a potential motivator to stage another spectacular terror attack. Al-Qaida could use the publicity it would gain to demonstrate its capabilities to a global audience and reclaim its leadership position among jihadi organizations.

To achieve the psychological impact and number of victims needed, al-Qaida is now more likely to attempt a CBRN attack than in the past. It will assess the feasibility of CBRN in this context. Most analysts agree that such an event would likely bear al-Qaida's signature of simultaneous and well-coordinated suicide attacks on multiple targets associated with the West.

CBRN TERROR POTENTIAL
Acquisition of chemical weapons
The acquisition of ready-to-use military-grade chemical weapons in a quantity that would allow for an effective terrorist attack and of the necessary delivery systems would only be possible for nonstate actors under three circumstances: (1) through transnational organized crime channels (TNOC) (Auerswald 2006, 559); (2) through a rogue state in

Dead pigeons cover the ground in the Damascus suburb of Arbeen in August 2013. Activists say the birds were killed during a chemical attack on civilians by Syrian government forces. REUTERS

possession of chemical weapons, e.g., as could happen with Hezbollah and the Syrian Assad regime (Hummel 2013, 3); or (3) by forcefully seizing weapons from state-owned stockpiles, as may have already happened during the Syrian insurrection (Hummel 2013, 3) or during the ISIS seizure of the disused Iraqi chemical weapons complex in Muthanna (BBC 2014).

The development and manufacture of chemical weapons in an adequate quality and quantity would most likely be too complex and expensive for most terrorist organizations, as demonstrated by Aum Shinrikyo (Danzig, et al. 2011, 28), the terrorist group that released the nerve agent sarin into train cars on the Tokyo subway, killing 12 and injuring about 6,000. It is easier to acquire toxic dual-use chemical substances meant for industrial or agricultural applications than military-grade chemical weapons (Forest 2012, 334).

Usability of chemical weapons
The simplest method of chemical weapon delivery is to release chemical agents in the target area, as done in the 1990 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam attack on a Sri Lankan military base in East Kiran (Hoffman 2009, 463-464), (Morbi 2011) or the 1995 Aum Shinrikyo attack on the Tokyo subway system (Danzig, et al. 2011, 31-32). Terrorists could also use a structure's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system to disperse the chemical (Forest 2012, 336).

Improvised chemical weapons made from conventional explosives and dual use chemicals, e.g., toxic industrial chemicals or pesticides, are the most likely type of CBRN weapon for terrorism. The low degree of complexity and widespread proliferation of the necessary components (Forest 2012, 334) make this kind of chemical weapon attractive to terrorists with budget constraints, e.g. self-funded jihadist cells.

The 2004 al-Qaida plot to use chemical weapons against official buildings in Amman, Jordan, (BBC 2004) and the 2003 al-Qaida New York city subway plot (Mowatt-Larssen 2011, 26), both involving dual-use chemicals, show that terrorist organizations have already explored such methods.

Another possible CBRN terrorism scenario would be the release of toxic substances through an attack on, or sabotage of, an industrial installation containing toxic chemicals situated close to the intended target area. A terrorist attack of this kind could have the same impact as the 1984 Bhopal, India, industrial gas leak that killed thousands and injured half a million (Hoffer 2011, 103-104).

Acquisition of biological weapons

The pathogens necessary to construct a biological weapon could be harvested in nature, acquired through TNOC networks or stolen from medical research facilities. Although terrorist organizations could produce pathogens themselves, the process would involve high-tech production facilities capable of turning out adequate quantities and knowledge of proper means of storage, transportation and delivery of the specific agent. Aum Shinrikyo, for example, was unable to successfully develop and utilize biological weapons, despite massive investment, and decided to use chemical weapons instead (Danzig, et al. 2011).

Because of the high psychological impact on the target population, the use of a radiological weapon in a terrorist attack is possible.

Usability of biological weapons

Potential delivery methods for chemical weapons could be modified to deploy biological weapons. Biological pathogens can be dispersed through a ventilation system, a target's food or water supply, or through contaminated objects like the mail or placed in an improvised explosive device (IED). The problem with the latter method is that up to 50 percent of the pathogen is destroyed by the dispersal explosion (Forest 2012, 337).

There is less risk of biological weapons use in contemporary terrorism because of the inherent complexity of acquisition, storage, transport and delivery (Hoffer 2011, 107). In addition, once the problems of identifying the specific agent are overcome (Graham 2010, 2), its effect on human targets can usually be medically mitigated (Hoffer 2011, 104).

The result of Aum Shinrikyo's biological weapon pursuit supports this argument. Al-Qaida also ran biological weapons programs in Afghanistan together with Jemaah Islamiyah (Joosse and Milward 2013, 3) and trained recruits to use such weapons, but is not known to have used biological weapons in any attacks, though they were connected to the 2003 ricin plot in the United Kingdom (Mowatt-Larssen 2011, 6, 23, 25).

The high degree of complexity related to development and delivery, in comparison to other types of CBRN weapons, and the lack of instant impact on the target population due to the pathogen-specific incubation time (Forest 2012, 336-342) make biological weapons a poor choice for a contemporary terrorist group.

Acquisition of radiological weapons

Several highly radioactive elements suitable for the construction of radiological dispersal devices (RDD) or radiation-emitting devices (RED) are widely obtainable because of their use in medicine and industry. (Forest 2012, 346). Terrorists can acquire these materials through TNOC networks (Schmid and Spencer-Smith 2012) or by stealing them from unsecured medical or industrial facilities.

Although the construction of a radiological device is a rather simple mechanical process, personnel risk radiation exposure while handling radioactive substances during the acquisition of the materials, the construction of the radiological device and its storage, transport and delivery.

Usability of radiological weapons

RDDs can be constructed in any form currently used for conventional IEDs. The radiological substances would increase the secondary effects of the IED, e.g., contamination of the target area and radiation poisoning of victims and first responders.

Despite increased security measures and built-in safety mechanisms against direct and indirect attacks for nuclear power plants worldwide (Hoffer 2011, 108), a terrorist attack on such a facility to turn it into a huge RDD should not be ruled out.

REDs are delivered by placing a radioactive substance where radiation will affect many people, such as a subway station or airport, an indoor stadium, a church, a government center or an office building (Forest 2012, 343). The 1995 Moscow Ismailovsky Park incident (Dolnik 2008, 1), which remains the only known attempt to use radiological weapons, demonstrates the potential of a RED.

Radiological weapons will most likely cause widespread fear and panic, especially when the target population becomes aware of the radioactive contamination (Hoffer 2011, 107). "The psychological effects would be the most devastating, mainly because of the automatic association of the word 'radioactive' with the word 'nuclear' in the minds of the majority of the world population," Adam Dolnik wrote in 2008 when he was director of research programs at the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention in Australia. "In reality, however, more people would probably die in stampedes and car accidents resulting from the panicking population's desire to leave the affected area immediately, than from direct effects of radiation."

Because of the high psychological impact on the target population, the use of a radiological weapon in a terrorist attack is possible. This type of CBRN weapon could be used for a large-scale, high-impact terrorist attack by a well-funded jihadist organization.

Acquisition of nuclear weapons

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, there was concern that terrorists might acquire nuclear weapons or weapons-grade material from one of the former Soviet republics (Dolnik 2008, 1). Al-Qaida made several attempts to acquire weapons-related materials and knowledge from elements in former Soviet republics (Schmid and Spencer-Smith 2012), Pakistan and sources in Africa (Mowatt-Larssen 2011, 17, 18, 19, 26, 27).

Besides the risk of nuclear proliferation posed by the arsenals of Pakistan and India (Hoffer 2011, 110), and the weapons programs of North Korea and Iran (Graham 2010, 3), TNOC networks remain the most likely sources for nuclear weapons, components and radioactive materials. The Umma Tameer-e-Nau, run by Bashiruddin Mahmood (Mowatt-Larssen 2011, 15), or Abdul Qader Khan's network (Auerswald 2006, 545, 557) are two examples of TNOC networks that were active in this field before being shut down.

Usability of nuclear weapons

The United States and other nations consider a nuclear-armed terrorist group to be the worst-case scenario (Auerswald 2006, 543), (Mowatt-Larssen 2011, 9). Al-Qaida has obviously also recognized this potential since they are known to have run a "nuclear weapon program" under Abdel Aziz al Masri since 1999, though they have not pursued this type of weapon since (Mowatt-Larssen 2011, 15, 18, 19).

The use of nuclear weapons as a terrorist weapon is very unlikely: It's generally assumed that nonstate actors don't have the capacities to acquire weapons-grade material in the required quantities, manufacture the weapons parts in isolation, construct a working device from these parts, and maintain the device properly during storage to keep it operational (Hoffer 2011, 109).

CONCLUSION

Jihadist organizations intend to acquire CBRN weapons of all types to a certain degree. The capability of an organization to acquire or construct CBRN weapons depends on the specific group and the type of weapon. The CBRN capabilities of an established, well-funded, experienced group such as al-Qaida are higher than that of a new jihadist band in Africa or parts of the Middle East.

Intent to acquire and use biological and radiological weapons is comparatively low. Jihadist organizations can acquire or produce biological weapons, but they are severely limited by the complexity and costs. Acquiring materials and components for radiological and nuclear weapons was easier following the breakup of the Soviet Union, but opportunities are limited today. Although al-Qaida displayed the intention to acquire nuclear weapons in the 1990s and early 2000s, it seems to have de-prioritized it. The nuclear capabilities of nonstate actors, including jihadist organizations, can be regarded as very low to nonexistent. There is no evidence of a significant change in capabilities for any of the different CBRN technologies in recent years.

The acquisition and use of chemical weapons seems to be of a higher priority than other types of CBRN weapons. The agents and materials for chemical weapons are generally more affordable, easier to acquire, and safer and simpler to construct, handle and deploy. The ongoing war in Syria, where there are still military-grade chemical weapons, has undoubtedly facilitated the acquisition of such weaponry. There have been several cases in recent years in which jihadists attempted to acquire and use chemical weapons, usually toxic dual-use chemicals, that are easier to obtain and less complex to use in improvised weapons. The recent case of ISIS seizing the disused Iraqi chemical weapons complex in Muthanna is another alarming indicator for this trend.

As a result, the most likely jihadist extremist CBRN terrorism scenario involves improvised chemical weapons attacks. There is incentive and opportunity to use this affordable and unsophisticated type of CBRN weapon to gain the attention of international media in an attempt to establish dominance in the current jihadist in-fighting and power struggles. Considering all the above, the use of certain types of CBRN weapons by contemporary jihadist organizations has become more likely. ◻

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THE RADICALIZATION OF
SYRIA

Jihadist rivalries in the Levant could threaten Europe

By Aaron Y. Zelin, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C.

[Photos by Reuters]

Al-Qaida, its branches and sympathizers viewed the 2011 Syrian uprising, which turned into a civil war, as a great opportunity to expand their reach. Of all of the Arab Spring countries, Syria was the most prized because of its religio-historical significance, relative closeness to the West (compared with other battlefields of jihad) and proximity to Israel with its jihadist-coveted city of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque. What al-Qaida viewed as a promise, though, has turned into a nightmare because of its now existential battle with the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) for supremacy of the global jihadist movement.

AL-QAIDA ENTERS THE SYRIAN CONFLICT

When the uprising in Syria first broke out in March 2011, jihadists, specifically al-Qaida, were flat-footed in their response. Al-Qaida would recover relatively quickly, though. Jabhat al-Nusrah (JN), al-Qaida's official branch in Syria and increasingly called "Al-Qaida in Bilad al-Sham" by its members, announced itself in late January 2012, but evidence suggests it was originally established in late July 2011. Abu Lokman, a senior JN commander in Aleppo, told the BBC in January 2013 that he joined the group in its infancy six months before its first public video release. This would place JN's founding at the end of July 2011, a period corroborated by other JN fighters in interviews with Western and Arab media.

Abu Lokman's date also coincides with al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri's first video message related to the Syrian uprising, released July 27, 2011. In it, he supported the "Muslims in Bilad al-Sham, the land of ribat, jihad, glory, Arabism and nobility." Two weeks after JN's announcement, on February 11, 2012, al-Zawahri released another video message in support of the Syria jihad and hopes for what is to come: "O lions of Sham, evoke the will of Jihad in the path of Allah to support Islam, the oppressed, the tortured, the captives, and to gain revenge for the Muslim martyrs. Evoke the will of Jihad in the path of Allah to establish a state that defends the Muslim countries, seeks to free the Golan, and continues Jihad until the flag of victory is raised above the usurped hills of al-Quds, Allah willing."

It is likely that in late summer 2011, al-Qaida coordinated with its Iraqi branch at the time (in February 2014, it was officially kicked out of al-Qaida). The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi dispatched operatives to Syria to set

up JN. Among them was Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, the leader of what would become JN, which officially announced itself in late January 2012. By November 2012, al-Jawlani had built JN into one of the opposition's best fighting forces, and locals viewed its members as fair arbiters when dealing with corruption and social services.

Similarly, al-Qaida placed key operatives in senior leadership positions of Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya, a local Syrian jihadist group. One of the key individuals was Abu Khalid al-Suri, a longtime friend of the infamous Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, believed to be imprisoned by Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria. Abu Khalid was a founding member for Ahrar al-Sham and is one of the reasons why it and JN have been such close partners. Like JN, Ahrar al-Sham was originally announced in late January 2012 and has grown to become one of, if not the most, powerful rebel groups in the Syrian war.

Since 2013, al-Qaida has dispatched a number of operatives to JN, and to a lesser extent, Ahrar al-Sham. Abdul Mohsin Abdullah Ibrahim Al Sharikh, better known as Sanafi al-Nasr, is the head of al-Qaida's Victory Committee in Syria and a top leader in JN. According to the U.S. Treasury Department, al-Qaida's former head of security for counterintelligence, Abu Wafa al-Saudi, is also in Syria, as well as Abu Humam al-Suri, who heads JN's paramilitary forces; former head of al-Qaida's Iran facilitation network Muhsin al-Fadhli; founding al-Qaida member Abu Firas al-Suri; and Abu Hasan, a former al-Qaida in Afghanistan fighter and now a top leader in Ahrar al-Sham. As such, al-Qaida has been able to send key influencers to help steer the jihad in Syria as well as do what Western governments fear the most: train and prepare individuals for external operations in the West.

Fighters with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant parade through Tel Abyad, Syria, in January 2014, one month before it publicly split with al-Qaida. Deadly rivalries between competing jihadis have increased bloodshed in Syria.

Members of the Syrian group Jabhat al-Nusrah, an al-Qaida affiliate, watch for warplanes loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Idlib province in May 2014.

FOREIGN FIGHTERS

In addition to placing key players in Syria and attempting to leverage influence within Ahrar al-Sham and JN, foreign fighters are a key constituency that al-Qaida hoped to meld and use for the future. Westerners are the biggest prize for al-Qaida because their passports allow them to travel to most locations relatively easily and they can more easily go back home to conduct attacks against the West. As of mid-2014, about 3,000 to 4,000 Westerners — the vast majority from Western Europe — were in Syria, many now dead, arrested or returned home.

There are eight reasons that explain why there has been such an unprecedented mobilization of individuals to join the fight in Syria:

Ease of travel: Unlike the destinations of past foreign fighter mobilizations, it is relatively easy to reach Syria. Most individuals fly or drive to Turkey and then proceed to Syria. Compared with Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia or Mali, going to Turkey does not necessarily raise any red flags since it is a huge tourist destination. Flights to Turkey, at least from Europe, are cheap, and most countries have visa waiver deals with the Turkish government. This makes travel easier, especially for those who might not be willing to risk going to more isolated locations.

Seasoned grassroots support networks: Compared to the Afghan jihad of the 1980s, today's foreign fighter networks are not starting from scratch. Rather, they are building from past efforts and tapping into established local grassroots movements and organizations. For example, in Western Europe there is al-Muhajirun in Britain, Sharia4Belgium in Belgium, Forsane Alizza in France, and Millatu Ibrahim in Germany, to name a few. In addition, in North Africa, the Ansar al-Sharia network operates in Libya and Tunisia.

Social media facilitation: In many respects, Syria is the first large-scale socially mediated war. In the past, individuals had to seek the password-protected jihadi forums to get information about groups and ideologues and discuss things among peers of online jihadi activists. Now, it is much easier to access Twitter and Facebook. These sites are relatively open and, in the case of Twitter, groups can target audiences through hashtags, potentially exposing those previously unexposed to the global jihadi movement. Twitter and Facebook unintentionally aid jihadist networking by providing recommendations for other like-minded individuals to "follow" or "friend," making such groups relatively easy to find through their algorithms.

Emotional resonance of the "cause:" A major motivation for many foreign fighters the over-the-top brutality and massacres the Assad regime has repeatedly perpetrated against the majority Sunni Muslim Syrian population. It does not help that the Assad regime is Alawite and viewed as heretical within Islam. The Shiite Iranian government, the Lebanese Hezbollah and a number of Iraqi Shiite militiamen assist the movement. Additionally, widely disseminated images of brutality evoke visceral emotions, creating a desire to help, especially given that overt responses to the tragedy, whether by Western governments or Arab regimes, are limited. Many feel it is a personal duty, in solidarity with their fellow Sunni Muslim brothers and sisters in Syria, to fight Assad.

"5-Star jihad" appeal: To many, the Syrian jihad is "cool" and a relatively comfortable activity compared to braving the wilderness in the mountains or deserts of Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia or Mali. In Syria, for example, many foreigners have lived in villas with pools and video game rooms.

Religious, historical and millenarian pull: That Damascus was once the seat of the ancient Caliphate provides a strong motivation for those who hope for its resurrection. Additionally, Islamic eschatology on end-of-times prophecies loom large since the key battles are located in the Levant, with some of the foreign fighters believing they are bringing about the day of judgment. Note that JN's media outlet is named *al-Manara al-Bayda*, the White Minaret. This refers to the minaret at the Grand Mosque in Damascus that Jesus is allegedly supposed to descend from to take on the *dajjal*, the false messiah, and hasten God's judgment.

Anti-Shiite sentiment: Such sentiment has become more prevalent as the conflict has evolved because of two key main dynamics: first, the assistance to the Assad regime by the Shiite foreign contingent of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), Lebanese Hezbollah, and Iraqi militiamen for the Assad regime. The second factor is the radicalization of many fighting forces within the rebel ranks into Salafism, whose doctrine is anti-Shiite.

The caliphate project: Now that ISIS controls territory from rural parts of Aleppo governorate in Syria through Anbar province in Iraq, many foreign fighters, especially Westerners, are attracted to state building. ISIS is not just talking the talk, but also walking the walk in comparison to al-Qaida/JN, which ISIS views as uncommitted to bringing forth a neo-Caliphate.

SUCCESS LEADS TO FITNA

JN's successes, not only on the battlefield but also in gaining allies and sympathizers within the mainstream of the rebellion, suggest that it has learned from its failures in Iraq in the past decade. The future looked bright for JN since it had also started the process of outreach to non-combatants within Syria to socialize and normalize its ideas with the population. JN's hope is that as its ideas become the norm the populace would not regard the group's ideas as radical, allowing it to implement harsh sharia judgments without backlash. While this effort continues, it has slowed because of actions taken by its father organization, ISI.

In April 2013, ISIS leader al-Baghdadi changed the name of his group from ISI to ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, because of the positive vibes Syrians were giving to JN. Al-Baghdadi likely believed that it was acceptable to announce publicly what was already known: that JN and ISI were one and the same. Yet this did not work out as planned. In fact, JN leader al-Jawlani rebuffed the name change and public cannibalization of his organization. Al-Jawlani reaffirmed his *bayat*, or allegiance, to al-Qaida central chief al-Zawahri, who tried and failed to nullify al-Baghdadi's power play. In defiance, al-Baghdadi released an audio message stating ISIS would remain in Syria and would not adhere to a division (the Iraq-Syria border) based on the World War I Sykes-Picot deal or take orders from a human since he only received inspiration from God. Amid the confusion, many foreign fighters left JN for ISIS, while al-Baghdadi himself moved from Iraq and established a base in Syria, according to the U.S. State Department. Therefore, contrary to the media narrative that JN merged with ISIS, the two groups actually separated.

This was a major setback for al-Qaida and its Syrian affiliate JN. Not only were more foreign fighters interested in ISIS, but al-Qaida and JN lost prestige and strength overall within the Syrian arena. JN was relatively quiet for the next few months, attempting to recover and plot a comeback. This was also the first sign that ISIS was not just making a power play for Syria, but also against al-Qaida for supreme leadership of the future of the global jihadi movement.

While there were tensions between these two groups until early February 2014, they attempted to smooth things over and put on a good public face. There was essentially an unwritten agreement that they would not bother each other and have a de facto competition of which group could do better on the battlefield against the Assad regime and its Iranian, Hezbollah and other Shiite allies.

Things would only get worse. On the evening of February 2, 2014, al-Qaida's general command released a statement disavowing itself from ISIS: "ISIS is not a branch of the Qaidat al-Jihad [al-Qaida's official name] group, we have no organizational relationship with it, and the group is not responsible for its actions." The rift between al-Qaida/JN and ISIS at first consisted mainly of sniping between leaders. The open warfare between the rebel groups — specifically the Syrian Revolutionaries Front (SRF), Jaysh al-Mujahedin (JM), and the Islamic Front (IF) — and ISIS since early January 2014 — widened the gap and was one of the main reasons al-Qaida finally cast ISIS away.

Since that announcement in February, there has been open warfare between JN and ISIS inside Syria, and online between grassroots activists. There have even been signs of foundation cracks in groups outside the Syrian theater in relation to the al-Qaida/ISIS split. There is now an open competition for the future of the global jihad. This, in turn, twisted al-Qaida's golden opportunity in Syria into a nightmare. While JN has recovered from the original announcement of ISIS and has been able to hold strong against open warfare between the two groups, in the eyes of many younger individuals in the movement, ISIS is the future and al-Qaida/JN is the past.

While there are indeed younger people with al-Qaida/JN, and there are older individuals with ISIS, in many ways the issue is generational. There is a fundamental difference of philosophies and when individuals came of age. Most in the al-Qaida camp came of age during the large-scale foreign fighter mobilizations in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s, while those on team ISIS came of age during the Iraq jihad of the last decade and the Syrian war. While it appears the al-Qaida-ISIS battle slightly favors ISIS, that does not necessarily mean al-Qaida and its branches are completely defeated. It is still early in the struggle. Al-Qaida could conceivably regain the upper hand, though it definitely will have to work hard to regain its post-9/11 swagger.

Al-Qaida's biggest potential play now is attacks on the West emanating from Syria. This would show that it still has the ability to conduct such operations and has not been hollowed out by drone attacks. This is why so many Western officials are worried about the slew of Western foreign fighters. Desperation could bring escalation, especially if ISIS believes it needs to compete in external operations as well. The future is nearly impossible to predict vis-à-vis the Syrian jihad and the al-Qaida/JN-ISIS war. Nevertheless, jihadists being jihadists, it is likely to include a lot of blood. □

Geopolitics

AND TRANSNATIONAL THREATS

*RUSSIA, CENTRAL ASIA, THE CAUCASUS
AND THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR*

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PHOTOS BY REUTERS

Russia's enduring support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad cannot be sufficiently explained by Russian hostility toward Western interventionism or other common causal narratives. From Moscow's point of view, the growing radical Islamism among Syria's insurgents threatens three key areas of Russian geostrategic interest: the Islamic and turbulent North Caucasus within Russia's borders, the fragile influence of Russia in the South Caucasus, and the stability of the autocracies in Central Asia. Russia tries to retain its interests in these areas by supporting the Assad regime. With an ever less likely diplomatic or military solution in Syria, the West will only be able to mitigate the Syrians' plight by taking Russia's interests into account.

Russia continues its strong diplomatic, economic and military support of the Assad regime. Moscow's rhetoric and behavior at the United Nations is the most visible sign of its patronage of Assad. Wielding its veto power at the Security Council, Russia repeatedly put down diplomatic initiatives to exert pressure on Damascus, resisting any effort that might lead to effective sanctions or intervention. In the fall of 2013, Russia played a major role in averting Western intervention by reshaping the global discourse away from deterrence and punishment for the illegal use of chemical weapons. The agreement that followed effectively rendered the Assad regime the guarantor for the safe transport and destruction of the Syrian chemical stockpile, buying it time to regain military footing.

Less visible, but no less important, is the direct economic and military support that Russia bestows on Syria. The Russian Navy repeatedly held exercises in Syrian waters. Russia, alongside Iran, is helping Syria import fuels for its heavy vehicles and army tanks. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Russia already provided 78 percent of Syria's arms imports between 2007 and 2011 and has significantly increased this volume since the beginning of the hostilities. Deliveries are said to include guided missiles, drones, vacuum bombs, spare parts for T-72 tanks, Mi-24 attack helicopters and aerial bombs. Russia has equipped the Assad regime with sophisticated medium range surface-to-air anti-aircraft weaponry such as Pantsir-S1 (SA-22) and Buk-M2 (SA-17) systems as well as anti-ship cruise missiles (P-800 Oniks, SS-N-26), thus raising the cost of outside intervention.

THE COSTS OF RUSSIAN SUPPORT

With only China's support, Russia has year after year defied broad majorities in both the UN General Assembly and the Security Council. Russia, therefore, increasingly shares the blame for the horrendous consequences of the civil war: Assad's forces are bombing civilians and deliberately restricting humanitarian aid to rebel areas to starve out the enemy. Meanwhile, the opposition increasingly radicalizes. More than 150,000 people have died and over 9 million are displaced. The conflict has metastasized out of Syria and is visibly flaring up the region's sectarian conflicts, most recently attested by the rapid advance of the Islamist State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in Iraq. Russia has consequently lost a lot of its diplomatic standing in the West and the Middle East.

In August 2013, reports surfaced that Bandar bin Sultan, then-Saudi head of intelligence, met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Bin Sultan demanded Russian support to increase pressure on the Assad regime. In return, Saudi Arabia would comply on a range of economic and energy issues by increasing oil prices through export restriction and by not competing with Russia's strong interests in the untapped oil and gas resources in the Mediterranean and the Russian gas pipeline network toward Central Europe. Bin Sultan also suggested that Russian compliance regarding Syria could cause Saudi Arabia to put effective pressure on Islamist militants within Russia, thereby preventing these militants from attacking the prestigious Sochi 2014 Olympics. Considering Russia's strong commitment to control Europe's energy inflows and make Sochi a soft-power success, it is revealing that Putin flat out rejected these inducements and tacit threats.

IN SEARCH OF RUSSIA'S MOTIVES

So why is Russia willing to bear these considerable costs? Policymakers, scholars and analysts have given various answers, usually citing economic, strategic, ideological and moral reasons. However, these motives are unsatisfactory and insufficient in light of Russia's overall demeanor.

The most common explanation is economic. Russia benefits from selling arms to Syria and engaging in energy relations. In 2011, the Russian state-owned arms trade monopoly Rosoboronexport sold at least $960 million worth of arms to Syria. The overall Russo-Syrian trade turnover amounted to $1.9 billion. On Christmas Day 2013, Syria struck a deal that allows Russia to explore Syria's offshore energy resources.

However, a look at the context discards trade as a significant reason: Even before the war, Syria had proved to be a bad debtor to Russia. A large majority of arms deals were canceled, postponed or left unpaid. Effective arms trade to Syria accounts for less than 5 percent of Russia's overall arms sales, and the Syrian share of the Russian general trade turnover accounted for a meager 0.26 percent in 2011. Russia is globally competitive with energy and weapons; it therefore does not depend on Syria's minor share of that trade. Furthermore, Russia has stronger economic interests with countries in the region that are hostile to Assad, as it trades in much higher volumes with Turkey and Israel. Russia is also trying to get into the potentially huge offshore gas reserves near Cyprus, Israel and Lebanon.

Some pundits, especially on the fringes of the political spectrum, hold the view that Russia's Syrian policy is a principled defense of state sovereignty, international peace and the Westphalian system. Another version of this argument, put forward by prominent experts such as Carnegie's Dmitri Trenin and Roy Allison, former head of Chatham House's Russia and Eurasia Program, regard Russia's resistance to intervention in Syria as a strategy to prevent the establishment of foreign intervention and regime change as an international norm and practice, thus protecting its own authoritarian regime in the long run.

While an instrumentally motivated defense of noninterventionism and support for the authoritarian status quo play a role in Russia's conduct abroad, it evidently does not override all other strategic goals. In 2001, Russia did not oppose regime change in Afghanistan and actively supported the United States It did nothing to prevent

Workers unload humanitarian aid sent from Russia to the Syrian government, in this photograph distributed by Syria's national news agency SANA in February 2014. Despite international criticism, Russia persists in supporting the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad.

its former ally Kurmanbek Bakiyev, then president of Kyrgyzstan, from being ousted by a popular revolution in 2010 that resulted in the establishment of a comparatively democratic government. It also allowed for intervention in Libya in 2011. Russia's own conduct abroad also testifies to its flexibility on intervention, witness its long-lasting support of Armenia's de facto occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, its enduring support of illegal enclaves on the sovereign territories of Moldova and Georgia, as well as its annexation of Crimea and its more recent activities in Eastern Ukraine.

Lastly, Russia's strong assistance to Syria is regarded as being part of a wider effort to engage in an aggressive zero-sum competition for strategic influence with the U.S. and its allies. Russia's support of Syria is largely seen as a part of its support for Iran, which, in turn, staunchly supports the Assad regime. But again, Russia's actions show that this is not the paramount priority of its approach. The Kremlin is withholding deliveries of S-300 (SA-10) missiles to Iran. These sophisticated and advanced long-range anti-aircraft systems would give the Islamic Republic considerable defensive and offensive capabilities in interstate conflicts. Russia also played a hesitant, yet crucial, role in enabling international sanctions to pressure Teheran and prevent the production of nuclear weapons, thereby siding with the U.S. on a major strategic issue. As for Syria itself, Russia has postponed the delivery of S-300 systems, MiG-29 jet fighters and Yak-130 training/fighter aircraft to the Assad regime and annulled existing contracts for MiG-31 advanced fighter jets.

Well before the civil war, Russia had announced that it would transform its tiny Syrian military port in Tartus into a major hub for Russian influence in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. During the civil war, however, Russia did not use Damascus' increasing dependence to enlarge its presence there. On the contrary, it quietly dropped its grandiose scheme by withdrawing all military and civilian personnel. All in all, Russia displays an unwillingness to overly antagonize the U.S. and its regional allies by strongly empowering their antagonists. It is also well aware that Syria is ill-suited to be a platform for Russian power projection.

THE OVERARCHING RUSSIAN GOAL: CONTAINING MILITANT ISLAM

What then explains Russia's strong, enduring and costly

support for the Assad regime? The answer lies in three geographical areas that Russia deems to be of vital importance: the North Caucasus, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. An examination of its conduct in these areas reveals that the Putin administration tries to contain various threats to its influence and security that are all connected to militant Islamism. Russia's Syria policy is thus largely determined by its interests in areas outside of the Middle East.

NORTH CAUCASUS

North of the Caucasus Mountains lie Russia's southern provinces. They encompass two districts and seven ethnically defined republics. Roughly 10 million people, most of them Muslims, live there. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has struggled to maintain authority over the region. It fought two brutal wars against secessionist Chechnya in 1994-1996 and 1999-2009, in which about 100,000 people lost their lives. After losing several conventional battles, the insurgents resorted to guerrilla tactics and terrorism. They have spread throughout the whole North Caucasus, especially Dagestan, and are taking on an ever more militant and Islamist character. They are organized in the networked "Caucasian Emirate" (CE) that calls for a caliphate in the North Caucasus ruled by a fundamentalist interpretation of Shariah.

While a renewal of serious secession efforts seems unlikely, the CE remains a serious challenge to Russia. According to the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 460 people were killed in 2013 as a direct result of terrorist attacks, ambushes and shootouts. In 2008, when Russia still regarded the matter as an internal war, only 340 died. Russia has dealt with the insurgency by resorting to blunt and often indiscriminate force. However, the underlying local problems that fuel the insurgency remain unresolved and are often exacerbated by Moscow's heavy hand. Unemployment is very high; an estimated 70 to 80 percent of those under 30 years old are out of work. Wages are low, corruption is enormous, and the attempts of the Russian state and its local governors to control and contain political Islam are viewed with spite by the North Caucasus' growing Salafist movement.

Militant Islamism in Russia's south even spread to Syria via the hundreds, if not thousands of North Caucasian jihadists, who are fighting on the side of al-Nusrah, al-Sham, the Army of Mujahedeen and ISIS. Thus, North Caucasians are found in all factions of the quarreling militant Islamist groups in Syria. They often hold commanding positions, such as Tarkhan Batirashvili, who, in the summer of 2013, was selected high commander of the northern front of ISIS. With the Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar, there exists a group almost exclusively comprised of North Caucasians and Russian-speaking fighters who pledge official allegiance to the CE and played significant roles in some of the fiercest battles in Syria.

Russia's actions and rhetoric show that Moscow's political elite acutely fears that militant Islam will spread,

intensify and refocus on the North Caucasus. Southern Russia has been attractive to global jihadist forces before: al-Qaida took part in the North Caucasian insurgency, especially during the second Chechen war and before 9/11. Prominent members of the global terror network were present, including Abu Omar al-Seif and Abu Omar al-Kuwaiti. Russia is well aware that the same Arab countries that support militant Islam in Syria, most prominently Saudi Arabia, have previously fueled the massive insurgency within its own borders. Qatar even offered its territory as a safe haven for Chechen separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, who was then murdered in an attack linked to the Russian secret services. Russian officials regularly denounce Russian Islamists as "Wahabis," a term that technically applies only to Saudi Arabian Salafism. They report that tens of thousands of radicalized Muslims in the North Caucasus support the Syrian Islamist opposition. Ramzan Kadyrov, president of the Chechen Republic, has even announced the formation of a special unit to combat terrorists from Syria that threaten to bring the battle to Russia.

Global jihadism is highly sensitive to changes in media attention, available funds and the existing conflict landscape. Due to the strong presence of North Caucasians in Syria and the prestigious successes of militant Islam against Russia in Chechnya and Afghanistan, the enduring insurgence in Russia's south could clearly present itself as an attractive jihadist project to join. If radical groups in Syria – or, considering recent developments, in Iraq – were to gain effective control, be it through government participation, occupation of vital territory or outright military victory, the fighters and resources devoted to jihad will find a new place to exert their momentum. Since militant Islam in Russia is already spreading from the North Caucasus to its formerly stable and strategically important regions of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, Russia is eager to prevent the re-emergence of outside support for its domestic Islamist militants.

SOUTH CAUCASUS

South of the Caucasus Mountains, Azerbaijan experiences similar problems with Sunni militants. As in Russia, the state controlled media refers to them as "Wahabis." Militant Islamist groups in Russia and Azerbaijan are highly interconnected: Azerbaijan is located directly south of Dagestan, now the main focus of CE militancy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, radical Islamists from the North Caucasus joined the wars of secession in neighboring Georgia and in Nagorno-Karabakh on Azerbaijan's own territory. Azerbaijani militants are said to have fought in Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq and even Mali. The CE supports these militants, has planned major attacks in Azerbaijan and funnels money and fighters into the country. Due to loose visa agreements with Turkey, Azerbaijan has become the foremost transit country for Islamist fighters from Russia and Central Asia moving to Syria. For all these reasons, Russia has obvious and strong motives to contain

militant Islam in Azerbaijan, but its concerns run even deeper.

Russia has major interests in the South Caucasus' pipeline architecture, the most likely obstacle to Russian efforts to control Europe's fossil fuel imports. However, Russia's influence in the region is limited. Its relations with Georgia are fraught on account of the war in 2008 and Russia's ongoing support for the secessionist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia exerts major influence on Armenia by enabling it to maintain its de facto military occupation of Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region. Azerbaijan, in turn, wields its position as the main energy transit hub connecting Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe to balance Russian influence. However, Russia provides 80 percent of Azerbaijan's weapons and has privileged access to Azerbaijan's powerful southern neighbor, Iran. The Islamic Republic, which like Azerbaijan features a Shiite majority, tries to use the existing ethnic and religious relations between the two countries to exert its influence in Azerbaijan. Sunni militants are hostile to Shiites whom they consider heretical. Due to geographical proximity, security relations, the confessional landscape and the shared goal of state and regime stability, Russia therefore maintains a certain, yet shaky, influence in Azerbaijan, which is directly connected to the successful containment of militant Sunni Islam.

CENTRAL ASIA

Jihadists transiting through Azerbaijan to Syria are not only emerging from Russia and Azerbaijan, but also from other former Soviet republics, especially those in Central Asia. There, a large majority of people profess adherence to the Muslim faith, and since the end of the Cold War, religious observance and the politicization of Islam have been growing. But so has militant Islamism. During the civil war in Tajikistan from 1992-1997, domestic Islamist groups fought besides Taliban units from Afghanistan and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which still maintains ties to al-Qaida and remains active in the region. To varying degrees, all the Central Asian countries experienced bombing and suicide attacks throughout the last decade. As in the North Caucasus, militant Islamism is fueled by staggeringly high degrees of political and economic exclusion, unemployment — especially among the young — poverty, repression, a huge shadow economy and widespread criminal networks. Groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia provide funding, manpower, education and training for Muslim extremists in the region. Since Central Asia's authoritarian leaders are rapidly aging and face increasing popular discontent, they look for patrons to maintain state and regime stability.

However, Russia's considerable influence in the region is waning. Although it retains some cultural influence, the use of Russian and the Cyrillic alphabet is declining while more and more ethnic Russians leave the region. China is increasingly penetrating the economies of Central Asia and has already surpassed Russia as the largest trading partner of Uzbekistan, which, next to Afghanistan, is the region's most populous country. Russia's conduct in Ukraine caused considerable reluctance in Central Asia to continue further integration into Russia's Eurasian Union.

Anticipating the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) departure from Afghanistan, as well as China's growing influence in Central Asia, Russia has stepped up its military presence in the region to act as a military hegemon. It is the leading member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which also comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Moscow leads regional anti-terrorism efforts and contributes the majority of troops to the CSTO's rapid response forces. Russian assurances to provide for regional security after the withdrawal of ISAF coincided with increased troop presence in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. These countries, incidentally, border directly on Afghanistan and China. Lending its considerable intelligence apparatus and military might to a joint effort of regime and state stability is one of the few possibilities left for Moscow to retain regional influence. Hence, with security and state stability linked to militant Islam, Russia is bound to contain it in yet another region.

MOSCOW'S STRATEGIC HORIZON

In the Russian geostrategic view, militant Islam in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East presents an interconnected, albeit not monumental or even coherent, host of direct and indirect threats to some of Moscow's core strategic interests.

One of the Russian regime's sources of legitimacy is Putin's image as a strong protector of the integrity and security of the motherland. Since the beginning of his first presidency, Putin has made secessionist Chechnya his issue. A rekindling of wide scale conflict in the North Caucasus and a resurgence of major terrorist attacks in Russia's big cities would cast serious doubts on his ability to continue to deliver on his promises. The regime has also increasingly picked up the rhetoric of Russian and Christian Orthodox supremacism and is reluctant to counter Russian right-wing extremists who, in Russia's main cities, are hunting down the "blacks," an ethnic slur assigned to migrant workers from the Caucasus and Central Asia. This is also reflected in an unwillingness to effectively integrate Russia's rapidly growing Muslim population, which according to various estimates already amounts to nearly 16 percent of the population and could reach 20 percent by 2020. With the ethnically Russian share of the population dramatically shrinking, Russia faces severe societal challenges. Because of the regime's reliance on Russian ethnic nationalism, as witnessed in the Ukrainian crisis, an effective integration of these Muslims, predominantly members of ethnic minorities, is not a viable option. By trying to hold on to its remaining sources of legitimacy, Moscow is set on a path to closely control domestic Islam and fight its militant outliers with brute and what is thought to be preventive force.

By actively supporting regimes in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Moscow is not only trying to contain long-range — but still dire — spillover threats into its

own heartland. The predominantly authoritarian rulers of Central Asia and Azerbaijan use the label of "Muslim militants" to defame and fight political enemies. In doing so, they secure their political survival by crude, propagandistic and often brutal means. Moscow uses its remaining assets of geopolitical influence — namely its position at the UN, its intelligence capabilities and its military power — to support these efforts and gain political leverage in these countries to advance other vital interests. First, these consist in preventing other great powers from advancing militarily to Russia's borders. By pushing to be Eurasia's indispensable power when it comes to regime and state security, Russia raises the opportunity costs for all countries considering closer relations with the West or China.

Second, through this political leverage, Russia seeks to secure its position as Europe's paramount energy provider. The prospect of major pipelines that connect the European Union, via Azerbaijan, with the huge oil and gas reserves of Central Asia is consequently seen as a considerable threat. In 2012, 79 percent of Russian oil exports and 76 percent of its gas exports went to the EU. More than half of the Russian state budget revenues are due to oil and gas sales. The $400 billion gas deal struck with China at the end of May 2014, even if implemented as envisioned, will not shift this general arrangement in the foreseeable future. Moscow has, as of yet, been able to maintain the fragile consent of Russia's oligarchs and huge swaths of the population that rely on various social services. But this consent is directly connected to Russia's ability to sell high-priced fossil fuels to Europe. However, in 2013, Russia needed an oil price of $110 per barrel to balance its budget. But Russian oil production will probably flatten no later than 2020 and dramatically decrease by 2035. This dire outlook is exacerbated by the U.S.'s ongoing shale gas revolution, increased Iraqi oil production, the EU's reinforced attempts to reach energy independence and the possible opening of Iran. With its immediate neighbors increasingly suspicious of Russia because of its conduct in the Ukraine, Moscow needs to do everything it can to keep its position in today's global energy architecture.

FEAR AND DECLINE IN PUTIN'S RUSSIA

Considering this strategic horizon, the reasoning of Russia's political elite seems to be exactly in line with what they say about militant Islam in Syria. Considering Russia's vital interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as its proven fear

of Islamist spillover into its volatile and already dangerous south, Moscow's Syria policy proves itself to follow a grim, yet all too logical rationale: By protecting Assad at the UN and empowering him against his domestic enemies, Russia seeks to contain the threat of militant Islamism migrating back to regions about which it genuinely cares. An enduring Assad regime keeps the jihadists fighting and dying at a distant place, prevents the emergence of safe havens and guarantees a more attractive destination for militants and funding than the Caucasus or Central Asia.

In the light of this logic, Russia's plans seem to be working well. Assad's regime is still relatively coherent, holds on to strategically vital areas of the country and retains Iran and Hezbollah as powerful regional allies. While the opposition, and especially its Islamist groups, engage in ever more vicious infighting, the loyalist forces are advancing in certain key areas, such as in Yabroud, which cuts into the opposition's supply lines from Lebanon. At the beginning of May 2014, Assad's forces retook Homs, Syria's third most populous city, which had been the opposition's stronghold for years. Assad was thereby able to extend the range of his mock elections into wide swaths of Syrian territory, thus strongly signaling his staying power. At the same time, the Syrian lira has stabilized and the production of natural gas has surpassed prewar levels.

Today's Russia is fearful and on the decline in two ways. First, it fears its own decline. While demographics and economics signal severe internal problems in the future, Russia is internationally isolated over Ukraine and will face serious problems when China decides to reopen the question of contested borders, behind which most of Russia's energy wealth lies. Second, due to these frightening prospects, Russia will decline any proposal that might jeopardize its current strategic assets. If Western governments want to reach a diplomatic solution, they will have to accept that Russia, with near certainty, will move on Syria only if some key demands are met: a robust guarantee of a reliable and effectively non-democratic government, the general upholding of Syria's current security and intelligence apparatus, the enduring influence of Iran in Damascus and the continuation of a hard power struggle against Islamist militants. It is very unlikely that the West will commit to these conditions. But with a unilateral option not on the table, a balance of power favorable to the Assad regime's survival and the worrying advances made by ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the West should start to think in this direction if it really wants to change the status quo. ☐

Employees stand near a pipe made for the South Stream pipeline at a plant in Russia's Nizhny Novgorod region in April 2014. The proposed pipeline across the Black Sea is a key part of Russia's plan to leave Europe dependent on its natural gas shipments.

Foreign Fighters
in Syria

By **Dr. Sam Mullins**, Marshall Center
Photos by Reuters

Tracking the trends and assessing the threat

Protests and unrest in Syria in March 2011 grew, seemingly overnight, into full-blown civil war. From the outset, the conflict attracted a variety of state and nonstate actors who believe they have a stake in the outcome. As the violence escalated, the war in Syria became the focal point of "global jihad," as promoted by al-Qaida and related groups. Now in its third year, the Syrian conflict has attracted an unprecedented number of foreign fighters — experts estimate 11,000 from more than 70 different countries — many of whom are violent jihadists.[1] The scale of the problem and ongoing ties between Muslim foreign fighters and jihadist terrorism generate deep concern that fighters will further radicalize while overseas and return home intent on carrying out domestic terrorist attacks.

It is therefore vital to conduct an accurate threat assessment and review the range of policy options available. I will draw upon recent studies of jihadist foreign fighters in Syria and other conflicts to examine who the fighters are, why and how they are going to Syria, what they are doing when they get there, and what they are likely to do if and when they return. I will also discuss options for dealing with the threat from a counterterrorism perspective.

FOREIGN FIGHTER PROFILES

About 70 percent of foreign fighters in Syria are from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), particularly Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Lebanon and Libya. Eighteen percent come from Western Europe — in particular France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. The remainder originates from a multitude of other countries, including the Balkans and former Soviet states, but also the United States, Canada and Australia.[2]

The vast majority of these fighters are young males, primarily in their 20s, although a growing number of females as young as 15[3] are going to Syria as well. In terms of demographic data, detailed statistics have yet to be compiled; however, past research shows that violent jihadists do not conform to a single profile. Marginalized and politically oppressed youth are particularly susceptible to radicalization and recruitment, but the jihad in Syria — like those before it — attracts people from all walks of life.

MOTIVES AND METHODS

What motivates people to leave home in search of war? Foreign fighters in Syria are primarily set on overthrowing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government and establishing Islamist rule in Syria and beyond; however, factors such as adventure, friendship, peer pressure, status, a "macho" fascination with violence and, in some cases, financial reward also drive participation. At its heart, fighters arrive out of a desire to defend fellow Muslims from being tortured and killed. Propaganda and recruitment materials thus tend to make "simple, visceral appeals to people's sense of solidarity and altruism"[4] using images and videos of human suffering and violence, as opposed to relying upon complex, ideological arguments.

Just as there isn't a simple demographic profile for all foreign fighters, neither is there one recruitment method. Based on previous studies of jihadist mobilization and what we now know about foreign fighters going to Syria, recruitment appears to involve a combination of top-down and bottom-up, face-to-face and online processes and influences. The Internet is playing a more prominent role in Syria than in any previous conflict. Jihadist propaganda is

Fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant confront civilians demonstrating against rebel infighting in Aleppo, Syria, in January 2014.

easily accessible via a multitude of websites and social media pages, which additionally provide networking opportunities.[5] Furthermore, hundreds of fighters use personal social media accounts to document experiences, answer questions and advise those interested in joining them. Hence, the knowledge and connections necessary to find one's way to Syria and join a jihadist organization are now much more accessible than in past conflicts.

Face-to-face radicalization and recruitment have nevertheless predominated historically and continue to play a major role. This may especially be the case in the MENA, which produces the largest numbers of foreign fighters, though fewer people have access to the Internet.[6] Even in Western countries, it would be a mistake to ignore the importance of physical networks. For example, it has been alleged that extremist groups associated with Al-Muhajiroun — an outlawed group that began in the UK and has since spread across Europe under a variety of names — have been sending people to Syria.[7] Indeed, at least 30 members of Sharia4Belgium have gone there,[8] and several European recruitment networks have been dismantled since the start of the war.

Whether actively recruited or self-radicalized, individuals must prepare for combat. Domestic training opportunities vary considerably, but at a minimum, aspiring mujahedeen are encouraged to improve their physical fitness before attempting to join the jihad. If recruits are self-financing, this also allows them time to raise enough money to travel and, in some cases, make a contribution to the cause. Some resort to criminal means, and counterterrorism experts are increasingly concerned that "charitable" collections are being used to finance jihadist organizations in Syria. However,

the majority rely on legitimate means. In the words of Abu Fidaa, the official spokesman of Dutch mujahedeen in Syria: "The costs to buy a ticket, hotel and taxi are not more than a few hundred euros. Furthermore, life here is really cheap. We get a good monthly payment and when you participate in big fights, you get your share in the spoils of war."[9]

Another lure is its location. Syria is relatively easy to get to — a major reason why it attracts so many foreign fighters in the first place. Fighters coming from the southeast, for instance, make use of well-established smuggling routes originally created to send jihadist volunteers in the opposite direction during the U.S. occupation of Iraq.[10] Most Western volunteers arrive via Turkey, which is easily accessible with a European passport. Once they clear customs, volunteers make their way south to prearranged safe houses before being taken across the border. As one safe house operator explained: "It's all done through invitations from friends."[11] Alternately, some may enter Syria using aid convoys before seeking out militant connections.[12]

OVERSEAS ACTIVITIES

Although there are many jihadist organizations operating in Syria, most foreign fighters appear to be joining either Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), which is the official representative of al-Qaida, or the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), which split from al-Qaida in February 2014 and is widely considered to be the most extreme and violent group of them all. Regardless of which group they join, recruits must complete basic training, which can last up to six weeks.[13] The duration and nature of training varies and is influenced by individual preferences. For example, in the past, foreign volunteers joining al-Qaida in Iraq would be asked

Fighting
in Syria

Middle Easterners and Europeans continue to represent the vast majority of foreign fighters in Syria. By the end of 2013, an estimated 3,300 to 11,000 individuals had arrived in Syria to fight the Assad regime. These figures include those still fighting in the country as well as those who have died, been arrested or returned home. In tracing the origins of foreign militants in Syria, experts have identified at least 74 source countries, including men from Central and South Asia, North America, Australia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

PER CONCORDIAM ILLUSTRATION

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

COUNTRY	Low estimate	High estimate
1. Algeria	68	123
2. Bahrain	12	12
3. Egypt	119	358
4. Iraq	59	247
5. Jordan	180	2,089
6. Kuwait	54	71
7. Lebanon	65	890
8. Libya	336	556
9. Mauritania	2	2
10. Morocco	77	91
11. Oman	1	1
12. Palestine	74	114
13. Qatar	15	14
14. Saudi Arabia	386	1,016
15. Sudan	2	96
16. Tunisia	382	970
17. Turkey	63	500
18. United Arab Emirates	14	14
19. Yemen	14	110

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

COUNTRY	Low estimate	High estimate
1. Albania	9	140
2. Austria	1	60
3. Belgium	76	296
4. Bosnia	18	60
5. Chechnya (Russia)	36	186
6. Denmark	25	84
7. Finland	4	20
8. France	63	412
9. Germany	34	240
10. Ireland	11	26
11. Italy	2	50
12. Kazakhstan	14	150
13. Netherlands	29	152
14. Norway	33	40
15. Spain	34	95
16. Sweden	39	87
17. United Kingdom	43	366

Source: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation

on arrival whether they wanted to be a fighter or a suicide bomber, determining which type of training they received.[14] Nevertheless, the majority of foreign fighters in Syria seem to be enrolled as combatants and after training will be assigned to a particular unit or brigade, sometimes based on nationality or language.[15]

As a fully trained member of ISIS or a similar organization, fighters take part in battles against rival opposition groups, as well as the Assad regime, and fulfill other duties, such as controlling the border of their group's territory.[16] In general, jihadist organizations employing foreign fighters are known for being particularly zealous and brutal, and Syria is no exception. Recent social media posts show that Europeans have proudly taken part in executions, including beheadings.[17] When not in combat roles, foreign fighters also take part in social welfare activities, such as handing out food to civilians and producing and disseminating online propaganda.[18]

At face value, foreign fighters are a "force multiplier," adding manpower and, in some cases, expertise. They are believed to have played decisive roles in certain battles.[19] However, many are inexperienced and appear to be little more than cannon fodder. Those who joined ISIS, in particular, have contributed significantly to growing sectarianism, brutality and infighting between rival militias and, in that sense, are weakening the rebellion. In addition to their impact within the conflict zone, foreign fighters' social media exploits and contributions to propaganda are no doubt playing a role in radicalization and recruitment in their countries of origin. The next question is, what happens when jihadist fighters return home?

COMING HOME

The biggest fear of "production" countries is that fighters will return and commit a terrorist attack at home. Providing that they are not immediately imprisoned, there are at least seven possible roles that fighters can play upon their return home:

1. actively assist authorities and/or attempt to dissuade others from going to fight;
2. cease involvement with militants and return to a "normal" life;
3. brag about their exploits and radicalize others;
4. actively facilitate the travel of new recruits to the conflict zone;
5. send money and/or equipment to the mujahedeen overseas;
6. recover from their "tour of duty" and seek additional conflicts in the future; and
7. plan and/or attempt to execute terrorist attacks.

Although an individual may transition between different roles over time — occasionally playing several roles at once — it helps to conceptualize the range of possibilities. Given the sheer numbers of foreign fighters compared to the number of incidents and arrests for terrorism, the majority of veteran jihadists do not conduct attacks when they return home. In Europe, only about 12 percent of Islamist terrorists have previously trained and/or fought abroad.[20] In fact, the best estimate to date, also focused on Western fighters, suggests that only about one in nine fighters conducts attacks back home.[21] Some foreign fighters in Syria have gone on record stating that they have no intention of pursuing terrorist acts at home,[22] and significant numbers are said to have become disillusioned by infighting and other negative experiences.[23]

Yet, having been a foreign fighter remains one of the best predictors for becoming a jihadist terrorist.[24] Veteran fighters also significantly increase the capability of groups that are planning attacks,[25] and an accumulation of anecdotal evidence suggests that they are extremely influential radicalizers and facilitators. Furthermore, several foreign jihadists in Syria have threatened that Western targets are "next,"[26] and it is believed that a number of individuals are being trained for this specific purpose.[27] Although the majority of foreign fighters do not appear to have domestic ambitions before they leave, such decisions are often made while in the conflict zone.[28]

The negative effects of returning foreign fighters are already coming to fruition. In September 2013, a veteran of the war in Syria and former military officer named Walid Badr blew himself up in Cairo.[29] In February 2014, several fighters who had returned from Syria were arrested in Kyrgyzstan on suspicion of planning multiple attacks in Central Asia.[30] In March, two plots involving returning fighters were reportedly foiled — one in the UK[31] and one in France[32] — and another plot, involving a member of JN, was foiled in Egypt in April.[33] At the beginning of May, Saudis announced that they had discovered an ISIS cell that was collecting donations, coordinating the smuggling of individuals and weapons, and preparing to resume assassinations and bombings in the kingdom.[34] More recently, a 21-year-old man who had fought in Syria was arrested in the Netherlands as he allegedly planned to commit an armed robbery in support of jihad.[35] In late May 2014, French jihadist Mehdi Nemmouche, who had spent a year in Syria, was charged in an attack at the Jewish Museum in Brussels that left four people dead.[36]

The bottom line is that, although most returning foreign fighters will not become domestic terrorists, an unknown minority of them will. Some countries are more likely to be targeted than others, but even in the absence of an attack, the potential for veteran jihadists to radicalize others and perpetuate the cycle of recruitment should not be ignored, nor should the fact that they are often responsible for extremely serious crimes while abroad.

POLICY OPTIONS

There are three stages of foreign fighter activity: before, during and after their time abroad. Corresponding efforts to stifle the phenomenon can be broadly classified as prevention, management and mitigation. Each of these can then be further subdivided into repressive and persuasive measures.

Prevention

Preventing the mobilization of foreign fighters should be the goal of counterstrategies, in spite of inadequate financial investments. Repressive preventive measures focus primarily on deterrence, early intervention and prevention of travel. Examples of behavior to target include possession or dissemination of terrorist training materials, participation in domestic terror training, fundraising for terrorism, conspiring to support or join a terrorist organization, and engaging in preparation for acts of terrorism. Such offenses enable a proactive approach, whereby individuals can be prosecuted before they leave the country. For example, in January 2014, two women were charged in the UK with planning to provide money to terrorists in Syria after one was arrested at Heathrow en route to Istanbul with 20,000 euros hidden in her underwear.[37] Nevertheless, successful prosecutions depend upon sufficient evidence, and it is extremely difficult to demonstrate prior intent vis-a-vis terrorism in a court of law.

When prosecutions are not feasible, an increasingly popular alternative involves applying legally authorized sanctions. Examples include the confiscation of passports or identity documents and restricting individual movements through the use of "security certificates" or similar legislation. Such measures are based on intelligence, as opposed to evidence, and thus have a lower threshold for when they can be applied. Nevertheless, restricting individual freedoms without trial is controversial. In some cases, it may be seen as also punishing suspects' families, and there may be significant legal challenges. Combined, these factors can undermine the legitimacy of the government and add to the alienation of vulnerable communities.

A possible solution to these problems is to enforce bans on going to Syria or elsewhere for the purposes of fighting without establishing a person's connection to terrorism. Intuitively, this makes sense; laws like this already exist in countries such as Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands and are being implemented elsewhere. However, it is worth noting that Belgium recently rejected a proposal to criminalize foreign fighting on a number of grounds, including that people are less likely to come forward with information, fighters are likely to become even more secretive, and evidence gathering would become a greater challenge.[38] Moreover, it remains to be seen whether these laws will actually be effective.

There are other repressive options available, such as notifying suspects that they are being watched, censoring online material and banning extremist organizations that appear to be contributing to radicalization. In general, however, these all suffer the fundamental flaw of treating the symptoms rather than the cause and can therefore result in additional resentment against the state. "Harassing" suspects confirms their negative worldview and is likely to increase, rather than decrease, their desire to leave the country. Meanwhile, forcibly preventing people from traveling may provoke them to take out their frustrations at home. This is where persuasive "soft" approaches can be beneficial.

Generally referred to under the catch-all of "countering violent extremism" (CVE), persuasive approaches aim to undermine the appeal of extremist narratives, either directly or indirectly, and allow a greater role for nongovernmental participation. Indirect approaches include things such as aid and development projects or providing education and employment, either at home or abroad. In secular countries, this may include efforts to improve integration of Muslim populations through education, individual mentoring or interfaith dialogue.[39] Although these measures are unlikely to have an immediate impact, over the long term they may help to quell grievances that extremist recruiters exploit and reduce the pool of potential recruits who are most susceptible to radicalization and recruitment.

Direct persuasive approaches include a variety of counterradicalization projects, which specifically deal with extremists and extremism. An example is the Channel Project in the UK, which aims to identify people vulnerable to radicalization before they commit offenses and steer them from extremism using a combination of mainstream social support mechanisms and tailored counterradicalization initiatives to challenge extremist beliefs.[40] Countermessaging can also take place online. The Assakina Campaign[41] in Saudi Arabia has been engaging extremists over the Internet since 2004 and has had some success in persuading people to abandon violence. More recently, Western governments, including the U.S.[42] and UK,[43] have taken to social media in an effort to undermine extremist narratives.

Persuasive efforts, whether physical or virtual, preventive or otherwise, are not without their limitations and potential drawbacks. To begin with, secular governments lack credibility in religious matters. Furthermore, CVE initiatives can exacerbate problems of alienation and radicalization by reinforcing the notion that Muslims are "suspect communities." It is also extremely difficult for secular governments to navigate the complex landscape of their respective Muslim populations, especially when choosing nongovernmental partners.[44] Moreover, it is nearly impossible to gauge the true impact of preventive

persuasion, since there is no way of telling if levels of foreign fighter mobilization would have been higher in the absence of intervention. Nevertheless, a failure to contest jihadist narratives would be to accept defeat a-priori in the "war of ideas" and, ultimately, the potential benefits far outweigh the costs.

Management

Relatively few options are available for individuals who have left home and joined the jihad in Syria or elsewhere. The primary task in repressive measures is to confirm that a person is indeed participating in the conflict and then gather as much information as possible on his background and friends, how he was recruited, how he got to Syria, which specific group he has joined overseas, what he is doing, and whether he is eventually killed. This information is usually difficult to acquire, although monitoring jihadist social media accounts is an excellent place to start. Collected data have multiple applications, such as identifying recruitment and facilitation networks, building a prosecution, and conducting a risk assessment for when a fighter comes home, which can determine how to proceed. Personal information might also be used to entice or coerce fighters to come home.

Sanctions can be applied at this stage, including withholding social benefits and freezing financial assets, which can suppress terrorism financing, force some fighters to return home and deter others from going altogether. More severe sanctions can include canceling residency rights and stripping a person of citizenship if he holds dual nationality, which may prevent active foreign fighters from returning home. Such sanctions are highly contentious. Their degree of deterrence is questionable and, although they may protect domestic populations in the short term, the resulting resentment may raise the risk of domestic terrorism in the long-run.

Persuasive approaches designed to manage the potential threat presented by a returning fighter have yet to be fully

Defendant and Saudi citizen Abdulrahman al-Shihri is arraigned at a state security court in Sanaa, Yemen, in September 2013. He is one in a group of five Saudis charged with involvement in al-Qaida. Some countries are increasingly using their legal systems to curb individuals' involvement in terrorism.

developed. The U.S. State Department is actively engaging jihadists online — including individuals in Syria — with its "Think Again Turn Away" Twitter campaign,[45] trying to coax them away from violence by highlighting the blunders, hypocrisy and brutality of groups such as ISIS and JN. This is an encouraging start, although it remains to be seen how effective it will be. EXIT Germany's Hayat program is a good example of a promising nongovernmental approach. It provides specialized counseling to the families of Islamist extremists in order to prevent them from going abroad to places like Syria or to persuade them to abandon violence and come home.[46] This program focuses on maintaining open lines of communication between the families and the individuals in question and avoiding a judgmental or confrontational approach that could drive them further away.

When it comes to managing the foreign fighter threat, it is not just about the suspects themselves but also very much about their families and their communities. While it is true that families can contribute to radicalization, they are often in the dark about their loved ones' activities until after they have left the country, and it is frequently family members who first notify authorities that there is a problem. Supporting families and building good community relations should therefore be a priority for authorities. It is important to prevent feelings of resentment and, possibly, further radicalization, and is essential to stimulate cooperation and the flow of information.

Mitigation

When veteran fighters return home, the task becomes damage control. For those countries that have outlawed foreign fighting, prosecution is an option, and Jordan, for example, is using it aggressively.[47] However, this may stir up domestic grievances. Furthermore, most countries lack the necessary laws, and returning fighters are likely to be interviewed and released, at least initially. Suspects

Militant Islamists are sentenced at a court in Ismailia city, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) outside Cairo in September 2012. The Egyptian court condemned 14 militant Islamists to death and four to life imprisonment for attacks on army and police forces in the Sinai Peninsula.

may be subsequently monitored until such time they are no longer deemed to be a threat or until they show signs of committing an offense, such as inciting terrorism or planning attacks. At that point a criminal investigation will commence. There are several limitations with this approach. First, risk assessment is not foolproof, meaning that false negatives are a real possibility. Second, it places a tremendous strain on security services, and it is likely that there will be too many former fighters for effective monitoring. Third, there are questions about how intrusive monitoring should be and how long it should last. Repressive approaches alone are insufficient to mitigate the threat.

Persuasive options for managing returning foreign fighters include "deradicalization" programs. These exist in various forms in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. However, very few have been created specifically to deradicalize veteran jihadist fighters. One notable exception is Saudi Arabia's program, which historically included three separate sections: domestic security offenders, those caught trying to go fight in Iraq or who had returned from fighting, and former Guantanamo detainees.[48] Although each country's approach is culturally unique, this would be a good time to re-examine the Saudi program with a specific focus on lessons learned from dealing with foreign fighters. It would make sense to combine this with a study of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) initiatives,[49] as well as veterans' programs from around the world.[50] Indeed, the ultimate goal of persuasive approaches to fighters returning from Syria should be that they refrain from violence and promoting violence and peacefully reintegrate into society. With this in mind, specialized deradicalization programs may or may not play

the lead role. Authorities should make use of mainstream health and social services and work with local communities to find the most culturally appropriate solutions.

CONCLUSION

So far, the problem of foreign fighters going to Syria has been dealt with mainly through repressive approaches, focused primarily on mitigating the threat once fighters return home. Repressive measures are absolutely necessary and can be improved, for example, through greater international cooperation. But they also have limitations. Overreliance on repressive measures treats only the symptoms and may add to domestic frustrations, thereby reinforcing jihadist narratives and increasing chances of terrorism at home.

To achieve a more comprehensive and long-term solution, governments should rebalance strategies to include more preventive and persuasive approaches, as well as "management" tactics for fighters already overseas. Such efforts should be pursued in collaboration with families and communities when possible. In particular, more investment in strategic communications might undermine the appeal of the jihadist, foreign fighter identity.[51] To this end, attempts to highlight the appalling atrocities that they commit should continue, but more effort and creativity is needed. UK Security Minister James Brokenshire recently affirmed that the Syrian people have said very clearly that "they don't want foreign fighters — they want humanitarian aid."[52] This is an extremely important message that should be repeatedly advertised in multiple platforms. For example, Syrian refugees could be interviewed on television explaining how foreign fighters are making things worse. The families of foreign fighters who were killed should appear in the media

so that would-be jihadists can see the grief that they could cause their loved ones. Furthermore, disillusioned veteran fighters should be utilized to get these messages across, including the reality that jihadists in Syria are spending more time killing fellow Muslims and members of the opposition than they are fighting Assad.

Finally, it is important to realize that Syria is only the latest in a succession of wars that have attracted jihadist foreign fighters since the 1980s, and it will not be the last of these conflicts. Policymakers must strive to mitigate the current threat. There have been encouraging signs of progress in a number of countries, including Germany, France and the UK. But we must also look beyond Syria and consider what needs to be done to stifle the next, inevitable wave of jihadist mobilization of foreign fighters. □

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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA FIGHTS TERRORISM

A Bosnian Armed Forces tank crushes rifles in May 2010 under an agreement to destroy surplus weaponry as a condition of Bosnia's approval of a NATO Membership Action Plan.

Responding to transnational threats through Euro-Atlantic integration

By Kemal Korjenić, Ministry of Defense, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Marshall Center alumnus

On October 28, 2011, a lone terrorist staged an attack on the United States Embassy in Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The terrorist act was completely unexpected; the assailant came out of a nearby park and opened fire on the embassy building, shouting radical slogans and demanding the withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Afghanistan.

The way Bosnia and Herzegovina's security agencies responded to the attack made it clear that the security sector in Bosnia was ill-prepared for such an attack, while reaffirming the country's vulnerability to terrorism. As the culprit moved openly along the main road near the center of the city, firing numerous rounds from an automatic weapon, some 50 minutes passed from the beginning of the attack until he was arrested. Fortunately, only one U.S. Embassy security police officer was lightly wounded and the embassy building sustained only minor damage.

Although Bosnia, in the past 2 1/2 years, has not suffered from terrorist attacks — according to the analysis of the relevant agencies — it cannot be said that Bosnia is safe from terrorism. The U.S. Embassy attack brought certain weaknesses of the Bosnian security system to the surface, particularly the failure to react quickly to the threat. Overlapping jurisdictions had cost valuable time as security agencies tried to determine which agency was responsible. In addition, the unusual modus operandi and visibility of the attack were something Bosnian security agencies had never dealt with before. After an earlier terrorist attack on the police station in the town of Bugojno in June 2010 — using a powerful bomb — law enforcement agencies' response was fast and efficient, and the perpetrator was arrested shortly afterward.[1] In this case, the investigation revealed that the perpetrator had previously drawn police attention by making radical statements. It is legitimate to question whether this person should have been subject to a certain kind of observation, which could have prevented the attack.

Subsequent analysis revealed that the U.S. Embassy assailant had also been known to the police because of his radical positions and actions. This emphasizes the need for law enforcement agencies to change their approach to combating terrorism, i.e. their transition from a reactive to a proactive phase. This transition should be implemented by prioritizing an active exchange of relevant intelligence-security information and creating an efficient joint planning process between domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies.

Bosnia has adopted several legal measures that provide security agencies with the necessary framework for counter-terrorism operations. Transnational security threats, including terrorism, do not recognize national and administrative borders, which necessitates that the response be planned, coordinated and comprehensive. Bosnia takes part in several regional and global initiatives and is committed and dedicated to actively fighting terrorism.

Mevlid Jasarević paces up and down a street in Sarajevo after opening fire on the U.S. Embassy on October 28, 2011. Jasarević was wounded by Bosnian police and arrested.   AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Professional experience shows that improved coordination between Bosnian security agencies on the national level is one of the first steps needed. The complexity of Bosnia's constitutional structure resulted in the establishment of numerous police agencies.[2] The large number of police agencies does not mean that Bosnia is more efficient at fighting terrorism. The effectiveness of these agencies is reduced by variable competencies among agencies, the slow flow of relevant information and the lack of a common approach or a central gathering and processing facility for terrorism related information. Finding the best approach,

A member of a special unit of the State Investigation and Protection Agency police force takes part in an anti-terrorist and hostage rescue drill in Sarajevo in August 2011.

Then-Deputy Minister of Defense Marina Pendes shakes hands with Bosnian Soldiers in October 2010 after the country agreed to send an infantry unit to join the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan.

aimed at maximum utilization of the various agencies' capacities, is a priority for Bosnia's counterterrorism policy.

The country's Strategy for Prevention and the Fight against Terrorism is a starting point.[3] This document reflects Bosnia's systematic and proactive counterterrorism efforts. The strategy reaffirms that Bosnia recognizes the importance of preventive measures. To bear fruit, these measures need to be implemented daily in a systematic, planned and organized way. In addition, active involvement from as many participants as possible, from many segments of society, is necessary, including representatives of academic and religious communities, law enforcement agencies and citizens. Key preventive measures include raising awareness about the danger of terrorism and disclosing ideological movements that use terrorist activities to achieve their goals. Recently, Bosnia adopted amendments to its criminal code to sanction those who go abroad, or try to, to participate in foreign wars.

The Counter Terrorism Task Force, consisting of representatives of all relevant agencies and headed by the chief prosecutor, was established with the primary task of implementing the Strategy for Prevention and the Fight Against Terrorism. Apart from supervising implementation of the strategy, the task force works to improve counterterrorism capabilities and efficiency. However, the task force faces many challenges, ranging from internal organization to a lack of money. Even though it operates in difficult circumstances, the task force makes important contributions to preventing and combating terrorism and will influence the future direction of Bosnia's efforts in this field.

Euro-Atlantic Counterterrorism Integration

Terrorism is a serious security threat to Bosnia and other Western Balkan countries; therefore, it is necessary for all countries in the region to cooperate closely. Weapons and other military devices left from past conflicts in the former Yugoslavia aggravate the problem. Many people still keep weapons and, for different reasons, are not willing to hand them over to law enforcement agencies. This is a challenge for security agencies and enables terrorists to obtain weapons relatively simply. The weapons used in the terrorist attacks in Bugojno and Sarajevo are probably remnants from the war that had been hidden in somebody's house.

Bosnia endeavors to reduce its vulnerability to this security threat through preventive measures,[4] cooperation between security agencies and improved cooperation within the region. Bosnia's efforts to join NATO are especially important. The relationship between Bosnia and NATO dates back to wartime. Many analysts believe that NATO, with Operation Deliberate Force,[5] brought peace to Bosnia.

The Dayton Peace Accords,[6] ending the war in Bosnia, were signed soon after NATO became engaged in the conflict. According to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1031, NATO was given the mandate to implement military aspects of the agreement,[7] following which NATO Implementation Forces (IFOR)[8] deployed and started implementing the accords. IFOR was replaced by the NATO Stabilization Force and, following consistent improvement of the security situation in Bosnia, NATO handed security responsibility over to European Union Forces in 2004.

While NATO was actively engaged in Bosnia, the country carried out numerous security sector reforms and expressed a clear commitment to become a NATO member, supported by numerous documents, and official statements and actions. A July 2001 Bosnian presidential statement on the commitment of Bosnia to Euro-Atlantic integration and the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) program is an important advance in defense sector reform. And the 2002 Decision of the Presidency on Organization of Defense Institutions clearly emphasizes that commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration and that collective security is the best solution for Bosnia.

Following the 2003-2005 defense reform process, Bosnia established a state Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces, with a multiethnic staff, and was admitted into the PfP. Bosnia will continue to reform as it moves toward NATO accession. In June 2009, the Bosnian presidency approved application for a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP), which was submitted in October 2009. The application was rejected at the December 2009 NATO meetings because it was determined that Bosnia had made insufficient progress on reforms. However, at an April 2010 NATO foreign ministers meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, Bosnia received conditional[9] MAP status after the Alliance assessed that progress had been made in certain areas (destruction of excess arms and ammunition and the Armed Forces' increased engagement in the International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan-ISAF).[10] MAP status was made dependent on registration under Ministry of Defense ownership, rather than under ownership of the Bosniak-Croat Federation or Republika Srpska entities, of military locations suitable for active use.

It was difficult to predict when the MAP mechanism would be unblocked because registration of military assets was a huge political issue in Bosnia. There were expectations that the issue would be resolved by a new government after the 2010 parliamentary elections. While awaiting political decisions on the military assets, the Ministry of Defense carried out numerous preparations (both legal and technical) regarding those assets' registration. During this process, the Ministry of Defense enjoyed active support from NATO staff in Sarajevo.

NATO conditioned the MAP accession, rather than denying it again, because the Alliance recognized Bosnia's progress and wanted to reward the efforts of the Armed Forces in contributing to the ISAF mission. But NATO also wanted additional confirmation of Bosnia's determination and commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration. The Alliance wanted to test Bosnian officials' ability to make tough decisions. From NATO's standpoint, registration of military assets to the ownership of the federal Bosnian government and Armed Forces should be confirmation of dedication to Alliance membership.

Conclusion

Bosnia is not immune to contemporary security threats, but continually works to strengthen capacity to prevent and successfully combat these threats. By making the decisive reforms necessary for NATO accession, Bosnia has built its capacities and become more competent to address security challenges. This is clearly demonstrated by Bosnia's global security efforts in the war against international terrorism and in peacekeeping operations (both military and police), including Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2005 to 2008. Bosnia attaches special importance to peacekeeping operations and combating terrorism, reflected in the Defense Act, which stipulates that participation in collective security operations, peacekeeping operations, fighting terrorism and supporting civil institutions in emergency situations are primary tasks of the Armed Forces.[11]

Everything mentioned so far reaffirms Bosnia's commitment to contribute to international security. Partner institutions, both domestic and international, should be involved in combating transnational security threats. Bosnia's commitment to attaining NATO membership is understandable, given that NATO provides the best framework for protection of national sovereignty and security. Security and defense cooperation are not the only benefits of NATO membership. Other types of beneficial support and cooperation available include catastrophe aid, humanitarian aid and educational support.

NATO membership is very important to combating terrorism because membership implies improved economic conditions and affirmation of democratic values. On the other hand, improving economic conditions would have a direct impact on reducing the possibility of lower-class citizens being recruited into terrorist activities. In addition, as a full NATO member, the Bosnian Armed Forces could exchange relevant intelligence-security information, send its members on joint operations, conduct joint exercises, participate in joint training with other NATO partners and benefit from NATO counterterrorism experience. Full NATO membership would enable Bosnia to develop security capacities in cooperation with Alliance partners and increase involvement in addressing regional and global security challenges.

Although many analysts argue that Bosnia needs NATO more than NATO needs Bosnia, Bosnia is still important to the Alliance. Bosnia is a new partner that has made substantial contributions to international security through participation in international missions. Through its geographic position, it can serve as a corridor to other new NATO candidates (Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo). Bosnia borders NATO (Croatia) to the west, while its eastern neighbor (Serbia), although a participant in the PfP, maintains a traditionally strong relationship with the Russian Federation, which through its energy sector, endeavors to strengthen its presence in the Balkans.

Perhaps the most important reason for NATO to accept Bosnia as a full partner is that the Alliance brought peace to the country. NATO participated in and made active contributions to the security reform process and accepted Bosnia as a partner. In this way, NATO would confirm its essential role and purpose — keeping member countries safe and preserving global peace. □

1. As a consequence of the terrorist attack in Bugojno, one police officer died and many more were injured, while surrounding buildings sustained extensive damage.
2. Bosnia has 16 police agencies at various levels, from national to canton.
3. This document was drafted for the period 2010-2013. The new strategy is being drafted.
4. Amnesty for all the people who voluntarily surrender weapons is in force, i.e., there will be no legal proceedings in the case of these people.
5. Air operation lasted from August 30 to September 15, 1995, and was aimed at destruction of communication systems and bombardment of artillery positions of the Bosnian Serb Army.
6. The Peace Agreement was signed on November 21, 1995, in Dayton, Ohio, USA, and became known as Dayton Peace Accords.
7. Dayton Peace Accords is composed of 11 annexes that cover military, political, and civilian aspects of the agreement, as well as those concerning regional stabilization.
8. Multinational Task Force composed of 60,000 soldiers under the command of NATO Gen. George Joulvan.
9. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization will accept the first Bosnian Annual National Program when all the immovable military assets are registered under Bosnian Ministry of Defense ownership. About 63 locations were evaluated by the Bosnian Ministry of Defense as suitable for further utilization by the Armed Forces.
10. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_62811.htm (May 18, 2014).
11. Article 4 of the Defense Act (Bosnia Official Gazette number 88/05).

GL(a)BAL HAZARD

KOSOVO'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN FIGHTING TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

By **KADRI ARIFI,** lecturer, University AAB, Kosovo, and
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Security threats are a continuous concern for societies, governments and international institutions. And war is no longer the only security threat that states face.[1] The end of the 20th century and the beginning of 21st have been characterized by the complexity of national and transnational security threats. Transnational terrorism has unquestionably become one of greatest threats to national and international security, along with armed conflicts, organized crime, financial crises, environmental degradation, pandemics, poverty and migration.

Terrorism is an old phenomenon, but it has evolved over time depending on economic, social and political development, globalization and rapid technological development. From a historical viewpoint — despite changes in modus operandi, form and appearance — terrorism has had extensive negative consequences around the world. However, the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, the Madrid train bombing in 2004, the London metro bombings in 2005 and other attacks around the world, with their excessive casualties and material damage, sowed widespread fear and indicated a new complex dimension to terrorism with the potential to threaten global peace and security.

These terrorist acts have much in common: the use of sophisticated technological equipment by a small group of individuals, substantial casualties and material damage, unlimited publicity, widespread fear and feelings of insecurity, and the involvement of radical groups with religious motivations. Therefore, it is easy to focus on terrorism with religious motives and on some of the most well-known terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaida and its affiliates.

A CONTINUING CHALLENGE

Although al-Qaida and its offshoots have suffered considerable losses, especially the killing of Osama bin Laden, the threat from them remains high, as do the threats emanating from the extremist ideology of radical political Islam itself. Based on this ideology, new groups are not only being established but are increasing their membership as a result of indoctrination by radical clerics and members of extremist groups, and from self-indoctrination through literature, websites or social networks. "The Internet remains 'an essential communication platform for terrorist organizations and their sympathizers,' enabling increasingly widespread access, anonymity and connection to a global audience that can be addressed in targeted way."[2]

The possibility of terrorist groups obtaining and using weapons of mass destruction and the consequences that such an act would have makes terrorism a serious threat for all countries, regardless of economic, political or military power, or geostrategic position, religion, ideology or state system.

Trends in transnational terrorism, viewed in their complexity, lead us to the conclusion that the threat will inevitably continue. Terrorist groups will use internal conflicts and other economic, societal or political grievances to recruit young members. Extreme poverty, high levels of unemployment and deficient education in some parts of the world, especially in Asia and Africa, create favorable recruitment and indoctrination climates for terrorist groups with radical Islamist ideologies. As United Nations security expert Paul Medhurst noted in reference to longtime insurgencies in northern India: "It can be concluded from the statistics shown that the most common profile of a fully-trained guerrilla/terrorist in the Jammu and Kashmir conflict is that of a 21 to 25 year old, of high school education, a labourer by occupation, who became a guerrilla-terrorist as a result of being unemployed."[3]

The large number of failed states, where state structures lack the capacities or political will to perform basic functions required for development, reduction of poverty, and protection of human rights and its citizenry is another factor contributing to transnational terrorism. These countries are characterized by internal

conflicts, extreme religious or ethnic violence, the spread of radical ideologies, disease and humanitarian crisis. These states can serve as terrorist safe havens for recruitment, training and operations, financial supporters, weapons procurement, and transit.

In Syria, the conflict between the Bashar al-Assad regime and opposition groups has attracted large numbers of foreign volunteers, mainly aligned with extremist groups. While the Syrian opposition is fighting for a free and democratic Syria, these extremists seek to create the Islamic state of Syria based on al-Qaida's ideology of "global jihad."

The participation of volunteers from Europe in this conflict poses a threat not only to the states of origin but also to the rest of Europe. These volunteers gain military experience, undergo deep indoctrination, establish contacts within international terrorist groups and, on returning to Europe, pose a multitude of security threats. They can spread extremist ideology, undertake violent or terrorist acts or serve as terrorist sleeper cells.

Globalization, with its rapid technological development in industry, science and transport, and its free movement of people, services and goods, has given terrorists more opportunities and terrorism a more serious dimension. These negative opportunities are present mainly in developed democracies, including those in North America and Europe. Therefore, countries with high levels of employment and education and efficient law enforcement institutions and security services face high level threats. The book *Fighting Chance: Global Trends and Shocks in the National Security Environment,* published by the U.S. National Defense University, concluded: "Many analysts believe that Western Europe is nowadays more exposed to the new forms of terrorism than the United States, including super terrorism using weapons of mass destruction. The next very large attack on the scale of 9/11 or larger — could take place in a European city."[4]

The high terrorism threat-level requires changes in the global security management approach. States and international organizations have increased political and diplomatic efforts to strengthen international cooperation in combating terrorism. As a result of these efforts, a great number of interstate and international cooperation agreements have been signed in the fields of economics, politics, diplomacy, defense, and justice and law enforcement, all with the intention of preventing terrorism and prosecuting terrorists and their supporters.

At the national level, most states are focused on capacity building to prevent and fight terrorism by building new mechanisms, strengthening existing mechanisms, updating legal infrastructures and policies, assigning bilateral and multilateral agreements, sharing knowledge and experiences and coordinating counterterror activities while preparing and building capacities to manage the consequences of any terrorist act.

The nexus between terrorism and organized crime makes transnational terrorism a very complex phenomenon. Drug trafficking, cyber crime, kidnapping, fraud and extortion, money laundering, trafficking of human beings, and smuggling of weapons and goods are mainly law enforcement tasks, but the involvement of terrorist groups in these activities indicates an important role for law enforcement agencies in prevention and prosecution of terrorism. Only a well-prepared, equipped and trained law enforcement organization, with high ethical standards and integrity, motivated personnel, and well-defined counterterrorism policy, may successfully cope with the security challenges of fighting terrorism.

The risk from terrorism is very real, and no country, small or large, strong or weak, is immune to the threat. It is necessary to approach the threat seriously and, parallel with efforts to prevent terrorist acts, focus on the strategic level, minimizing the factors and root causes that lead to violent extremism and radicalization.

Muslim women in Pristina protest the Kosovo government's ban on pupils wearing headscarves in public schools. Religious tensions can serve as sources of extremism.

Avoiding or minimizing factors and causes leading to extremism and radicalization is a complex task. Nonetheless, it is considered to be the most effective way to increase citizens' awareness and protect them from falling prey to influences from individuals or groups that promote extremism. In addition to good governance, political and social inclusion, human rights, law enforcement and access to education, governments and institutions should be focused on addressing economic, social and political grievances, which are considered key and direct factors affecting the spread of violent extremism and radicalization.

Transnational terrorism is a global network that has no borders. Al-Qaida continues to search for safe-shelter countries to take advantage of democratic development and regional and global integration processes. Success in combating transnational terrorism is conditioned by

the success of a holistic approach and international cooperation.

Despite achievements, international cooperation against terrorism is challenged by differing national interests. There are differences in the perception and definition of terrorism, differences in national legislation, and disagreements over which counterterrorism measures are appropriate and when they should be applied, especially regarding sanctions or use of force.

THE CASE OF KOSOVO

Kosovo was established as a state during a time of complex global security challenges. As a relatively small state, Kosovo faced many challenges in state building — building institutions and legal infrastructure and addressing economic, social and political problems — while it also was confronted with major threats to internal security and threats from crime and transnational terrorism.

Kosovo is committed to providing security to its citizens and has become an active contributor to peace, stability and security in its region, cooperating with neighbors and fulfilling international obligations in the fight against terrorism. Kosovo has a pro-Western orientation with a constitutional, secular state and clear, strategic objectives for integration into the European Union and NATO.

Most of Kosovo's population practices traditional and moderate Islam and sets a good example of inter-religious tolerance in the region. However, Kosovo's institutions should remain vigilant because indoctrination with radical Islamic ideology has not spared the country, and there are clear signs of Islamist extremism and radicalization, mainly among the most vulnerable people. A considerable number of young people have been recruited into Islamic extremist groups fighting in Syria with the perception that they are participating in a "holy war" and answering the call for "jihad," though some are likely motivated by material benefits or a sense of personal adventure.

Kosovo has not faced direct threats of terrorism, but it is still vulnerable. Geopolitical position, relatively new institutions, poverty and high levels of corruption and organized crime[5] increase the terrorism threat

level, as does the fact that military and police forces from Western countries remain in Kosovo. Therefore, the nation's institutions have undergone a series of legal measures, strengthening capacities and drafting strategic counterterrorism documents. Some argue that Kosovo has, through all these new measures, improved its effectiveness in counterterrorism.[6]

The Kosovo Assembly, assisted by international mechanisms present in Kosovo, approved a package of legislation — harmonized with the EU laws — to prevent and combat terrorism: In article 135 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo, the act of terrorism is considered to be the commission of one or more crimes[7] "with an intent to seriously intimidate a population, to unduly compel a public entity, government or international organization to do or abstain from doing any act, or to seriously destabilize or destroy the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of the Republic of Kosovo, another state or an international organization." The criminal code specifically sanctions related acts such as committing terrorist acts (Article 136), assisting in committing terrorism (Article 137), facilitating terrorism (Article 138), recruiting for terrorism (Article 139), training in terrorism (Article 140), inducement to commit terrorist acts (Article 141), concealing or not informing on terrorists or terrorist groups (Article 142), and organization of and participation in a terrorist group (Article 143).

The law on prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism, the law on special prosecution, the law on controlling and supervising state borders and the law on foreigners were also approved to directly or indirectly fight terrorism. In addition, the government has drafted a law prohibiting citizens from engaging in armed conflicts outside the country. This law makes criminal the act of joining or participating in a foreign army or police, foreign paramilitary or para-police formation, in a group or individually, in any form of armed conflict outside the territory of the republic.

There has also been notable progress in strengthening security and law enforcement agencies to better fight terrorism by building operational capacities within

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Hundreds of Serbian youths riot in July 2011, setting fire to a border crossing between Serbia and Kosovo after Kosovo police took control of the border crossings.

the Kosovo Security Forces, Kosovo Intelligence Agency, Financial Intelligence Unit, Kosovo Customs and especially the Kosovo Police, which has established professional counterterrorism capacities and trained and equipped special intervention units.

The National Security Strategy, National Counter Terrorism Strategy, Strategy for Integrated Border Management, Strategy for Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, Integrated Emergency Management System and Reaction Plan define the responsibilities and obligations of all institutions in Kosovo, with implementation coordinated by the Counter Terrorism National Coordinator. The structure and content of these strategic documents indicate that Kosovo considers terrorism and the spread of extremism as a complex multidimensional phenomenon. Therefore, combating terrorism is not limited to police or military activities — a multidimensional, holistic approach of all institutions, nongovernmental organizations, civil society and religious and ethnic communities is necessary.

Despite its achievements, Kosovo faces challenges requiring regional and global cooperation. Exchanging experiences, best practices and information, and joint counterterrorism training and operations are invaluable to improving Kosovo's security and counterterrorism capacities. One important challenge is changing the perception of stakeholders that only law enforcement agencies are in charge of fighting terrorism, when a whole-of-government approach is necessary.

Another of Kosovo's challenges is Southeast Europe's ongoing economic and social transition. The people of Kosovo lack sufficient prospects, with high unemployment and insufficient sources of legal vocations. According to recent Kosovo government statistics, the country's unemployment rate has reached nearly 31 percent, and the rate among people younger than 25 is 55 percent.[8] Furthermore, Kosovo has been identified as a transit country for trafficking human beings, weapons and drugs.

Finally, Kosovo is not a member of important international institutions and organizations because of political obstacles hindering the country's institutions from playing a more active role in international counterterrorism efforts. According to the U.S. State Department: "Kosovo's membership in many regional and international organizations has been blocked because many countries do not recognize its independence, which impedes cooperation on many issues, including counterterrorism."[9]

CONCLUSION

Trends in transnational terrorism show an increasing complexity and probability that a high threat level will continue and impose the need for states and international institutions to alter their approach for preventing and combating this phenomenon. Changes, such as legal reforms, enhanced state capacities, interagency cooperation, interstate agreements and joint operations, and the exchange of information and practical experiences on interagency, regional and international levels have resulted in significant counterterrorism achievements. However, there is no doubt that transnational terrorism remains a serious security challenge.

The government of Kosovo has made countering extremism and terrorism a priority and has taken positive steps in drafting new legislation and strategies. A comprehensive counterterrorism strategy requires the engagement of all state structures and citizens who are well-informed about the consequences of extremism and terrorism. Despite this progress, obvious signs of extremism are present. A number of young people from Kosovo have joined extremist groups in Syria, influenced by radical ideologies and internal factors such as poverty and unemployment. This reality calls for a greater commitment from Kosovo's institutions in addressing economic, social and political concerns that directly impact radicalization and the spread of violent extremism.

Kosovo's institutions should intensify efforts to strengthen law enforcement, fully implement the National Counter Terrorism Strategy, increase citizen and stakeholder awareness and strengthen regional cooperation and international partnerships to more effectively prevent and combat violent extremism and terrorism. ☐

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VIOLENT EXTREMISM

A case study of the Kenya Community Support Centre

By **PHYLLIS MUEMA,** executive director, Kenya Community Support Centre
Photos by Kenya Community Support Centre

Violent extremism is a prevailing security threat to Kenya, a major strategic, political and economic player in Africa. The country has suffered numerous terrorist attacks, including the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi and the 2002 bombing of the Paradise Hotel on the Kenyan coast. Various terrorist groups target Kenya, including al-Qaida affiliate al-Shabab, which declared war on Kenya after its military forces went into Somalia in 2011 to flush out al-Shabab.

With its challenging mixture of land disputes, religious tensions, and a nascent separatist movement, Kenya's coastal region has emerged as a hot spot for political violence and extremist ideologies. Culpability for much of the violence rests on nonstate forces, such as the Mombasa Republic Council, al-Shabab-affiliated groups and tribal militias. Failure by the Kenyan government to implement land reform and recommendations of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission report have exposed the communities to potentially violent reactions. Kenya lacks a national counter-violent-extremism strategy that would provide policy direction and create room for ad hoc reactions toward terrorism and violent extremism.

The Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE) is a national nongovernmental organization established in 2006 with a mission to mobilize, organize and empower citizens to participate effectively in social, economic and political processes that impact their well-being. KECOSCE works with citizens 15 to 35 years old, students, women, clerics and local government security agencies, including the police, the civil administration and national commissions, to address underlying conditions that give rise to violent extremism.

Over the past five years, KECOSCE has introduced diverse initiatives, including:

- Mentoring and empowerment programs for in-school and out-of-school youth;
- Mobilizing and supporting women against violent extremism;
- Training and discussion forums to aid understanding of religious teachings and narratives commonly misinterpreted by extremists to woo ignorant youth under the guise of religion;
- Managing policy and grievance discussions with government institutions, advocating for the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism and sustaining the coordination of national efforts to reduce the threat of violent radicalization, deterring terrorists from recruiting and operating within communities;
- Messaging and countermessaging — broadcasting victims' testimony in the media through radio and print;
- Educating and teaching youth employable skills; this is a developmental intervention aimed at addressing poverty, unemployment and marginalization;
- Empowering the marginalized through civic education and awareness, and promoting constitutionalism, citizenship and leadership.

KECOSCE empowers Kenyan communities to resist violent extremism and radicalization through dialogue and community outreach.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Listed below are some of KECOSCE's achievements.

- Women Against Violent Extremism networks support female terrorism victims. The networks provide solidarity for women whose children have joined violent extremist groups. The networks also empower women to challenge the ideology that promotes violence, including monitoring activities of "guests" brought to homes under the guise of religion, some of whom have been found to be among the most wanted criminals.

- Kataa Kutumiwa, meaning "refuse to be used," is a youth program that has provided a platform for youth to talk with elders, religious leaders and government officials about issues related to religious ideology and narratives that are misinterpreted by recruiting agents to sanction violence. This has empowered youth to engage radicalizers in debate and challenge their viewpoints and victim ideology. The project has educated youth on the constitution, leadership and patriotism. It has opened channels of communication between youth and government officials to discuss issues related to arrests, marginalization and unemployment with government security officials, scholars, elders and imams.

- Using multimedia has helped facilitate conversations among target communities. Youth discussion forums via radio, social media, discussion boards and billboards enable moderated debates between nonviolent extremists and moderates and can promote good governance and participation in leadership.

- KECOSCE Director Phyllis Muema was awarded the Head of State Commendation, a presidential award in recognition of her work and that of KECOSCE in promoting peace and security on the coast of Kenya.

- Joint mapping and training workshops between law enforcement and community leaders, including women, youth and religious leaders, facilitate a closer partnership and collaboration that promotes peace, security and respect for human rights. Addressing the challenges of information sharing and law enforcement response with respect to cultural and religious practices, these workshops have opened alternate communication channels between the police and peace monitors.

CHALLENGES

KECOSCE's projects require a rigorous and costly proposal and decision-making process. The organization relies on money from donor agencies, whereas violent extremists often have huge financial and technological means at their disposal. Donor agencies provide ready resources to produce messages and sustain the group's recruitment drives.

Historically, Kenyan security agencies have conducted arbitrary raids and profiled communities when investigating violent extremists. This has left the community feeling like victims of police harassment and feeds the potential for further radicalization, creating a spiral effect that can render KECOSCE's interventions ineffective.

Kenya lacks a national coordination center and a policy framework for countering violent extremism. That leaves the country without a platform for coordinated approaches that could leverage preventive and hard security measures. There are large gaps at operational levels between various government departments, including intelligence, the national counterterrorism center, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and the military, rendering the work of nonstate actors difficult.

The government of Kenya does not provide financial resources for prevention measures to complement its tactical approaches. Despite initiatives such as community policing, the government project Nyumba Kumi that requires citizens to know their neighbors, and public expectations for support, KECOSCE must seek funding from other governments to support its work. Only by these means can it continue its work to stem extremism. □

COMMITTED DEFENSE

U.S. Air Force bombers demonstrate capabilities during joint training in Europe

By *per Concordiam* Staff
Photos by Tech. Sgt. Chrissy Best/U.S. Air Force

I n June 2014, five U.S. Air Force heavy bombers arrived at Royal Air Force (RAF) station Fairford in the United Kingdom for a two-week training mission. The two B-2 Spirit and three B-52 Stratofortress long-range, multirole bombers deployed to Europe to train and integrate with U.S. and allied forces in the region. The deployment was coordinated with U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and NATO and relied on the U.S.'s close, long-standing relationship with the UK and its Armed Forces.

While in the European theater, the Stratofortresses also took part in commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, in honor of the bomber crews who helped set the stage for the successful amphibious landing. The B-52s are part of the U.S. Eighth Air Force, which traces its history to World War II, when it lost more than 26,000 airmen in combat operations helping to secure Allied victory in Europe.

Air crews and ground support personnel conducted 24-hour operations with the long-range bombers flying multiple missions throughout the USEUCOM and U.S. African Command (USAFRICOM) regions, training and integrating with Allied troops. "This deployment of strategic bombers provides an invaluable opportunity to strengthen and improve interoperability with our allies and partners," said Adm. Cecil Haney, commander of U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), which oversees the United States' strategic bomber fleet.

The vigorous training schedule highlighted the U.S. military's readiness, commitment and capability to defend U.S. allies and interests in the region in times of conflict, and to deny or disrupt threats. "The training and integration of strategic forces demonstrates to our nation's leaders and our allies that we have the right mix of aircraft and expertise to respond to a variety of potential threats and situations," Adm. Haney said. The Air Force emphasized that the bomber deployment has been planned for nearly a year and was not a response to the escalation of tensions in Eastern Europe or the Middle East.

Assurance, deterrence and readiness

Such training missions help the U.S. maintain a strong, credible strategic force to enhance the security of allies and partners. The U.S. military regularly assesses force readiness and positions strategic assets to maintain operational and support capabilities. The Air Force augments overseas assets when necessary to create a forward presence essential for executing full-spectrum global operations.

The "Spirit of Indiana," a B-2 Spirit stealth bomber, prepares to land at RAF Fairford in England in June 2014. The B-2's primary mission is to attack time-critical targets early in a conflict to minimize an enemy's war-making potential.

Deterring a strategic attack on the U.S. or its allies is first among USSTRATCOM's missions. These kinds of deployments, in coordination with regional U.S. and allied forces, support global operations and deter strategic attacks by providing a credible, flexible always-ready capability. The B-2 Spirit and B-52 Stratofortress can deliver large payloads of precision conventional or nuclear ordnance over long distances.

The Air Force regularly conducts training missions to improve readiness — sharpening air and ground crew skills, providing unique opportunities for joint training with allied forces and familiarizing aircrews with bases and

A B-52 Stratofortress takes off from RAF Fairford, England, in June 2014. The bomber deployed to the United Kingdom as part of a multinational training operation.

operations in the USEUCOM and USAFRICOM regions. "We are worldwide deployable," said Lt. Col. Bradley Cochran, commander of the 393rd Bomb Squadron at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, home of the B-2s. "Training opportunities like this one are invaluable to us because they get us familiar with the command and control structure, the air traffic control structure and different procedures that are in the area of operations."

Familiarity with RAF Fairford is important because it is a strategic base capable of supporting a wide variety of flying operations. As U.S. Air Force Europe's only Bomber Forward Operating Location, Fairford is well-equipped with a 3,050-meter runway and space enough for large-scale operations. NATO combat forces have used the air base in the past: In 2003, 122 sorties flew from Fairford in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The bombers

The B-2 Spirit, possessing ultramodern stealth technology, and the B-52 Stratofortress, the half-century-old workhorse of the U.S. bomber fleet, complement each other. Both warplanes can project force over long distances. Comfortable at altitudes of more than 15,000 meters, the B-52 can fly combat missions beyond 14,000 kilometers without refueling. Although the first B-52A appeared in 1954 and the updated H model in 1961, the current fleet has been extensively upgraded with the most advanced targeting and image processing technology, improving its combat effectiveness in all conditions.

The aircraft displayed its versatility in Operation Desert Storm, during which it delivered 40 percent of all coalition ordnance dropped. It continued its valuable role in Operation Enduring Freedom, precisely striking troop formations, fixed installations and hardened bunkers. In 1996, a B-52 flew a nearly 26,000-kilometer combat mission between the U.S. and Baghdad.

The B-2 has the ability to penetrate an enemy's most sophisticated defenses and hit its most heavily defended targets — a capability that provides a strong, effective deterrent. It has an effective range of 9,600 kilometers.

The first B-2 was deployed in 1993, and the plane saw extensive action a few years later in Operation Allied Force in the former Yugoslavia, destroying a third of all targets while flying nonstop missions from its base in Missouri. B-2s flew 49 sorties in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, dropping more than 680,000 kilograms of munitions.

Ongoing joint training missions like the B-2 and B-52 deployment to Europe enable the U.S. military to improve interoperability with NATO allies and partners. It familiarizes aircrews with the region while honing their skills. Most importantly, this training demonstrates to friend and potential foe alike the awesome capabilities of the U.S. strategic bomber fleet and the U.S.'s determined commitment to defend its friends and allies from aggression by all means necessary. □

The first floating liquid natural gas regasification plant in the world, the FSRU Toscana, is towed into the Grand Harbor in Malta in July 2013. The converted ship will be moored in Livorno, Italy, and used as a gas terminal and export point.   REUTERS

GAS

Diversifying energy supplies — and conserving more of what it already uses — would help Europe alleviate supply shocks

By *per Concordiam* Staff

Ukraine once possessed some of Europe's richest deposits of exploitable natural gas. The Galician gas and oil fields, first discovered during Austro-Hungarian administration in the 19th century, made the region an energy pioneer. The first commercially successful kerosene lamp was invented in Lviv, and that western Ukrainian city was among the first to be illuminated by gas street lighting. Though Ukrainian fields still pumped huge quantities of gas as late as the 1980s, domestic production has since been superseded by foreign competitors, most notably Russian state-controlled gas producer Gazprom.

A nagging sense of energy insecurity in Europe, exemplified by the gas pipeline interruptions instigated by Russian suppliers in the winter of 2009, has left countries such as Ukraine searching for alternatives. Reinvigorating Ukraine's gas industry through a combination of conventional and unconventional drilling is one prong of the strategy that would leave Europe better able to fend for its own energy needs. Also important to the strategy is boosting energy efficiency, promoting renewable energy and diversifying sources of fossil fuel to include more Central Asian, Middle Eastern and North American suppliers.

To stem what they consider unfair business dealings from Gazprom, European leaders have also stepped up scrutiny of the Russian energy conglomerate. In September 2012, the European Commission launched an antitrust investigation into accusations that Gazprom acts as a monopoly that manipulates gas prices. "Depending on the outcome, the probe could result in heavy fines or force Gazprom to overhaul its business practices across the EU in order to comply with the bloc's antitrust rules," the *Financial Times* noted in February 2014.

UKRAINIAN ENERGY MARKET

Ukraine is Russia's largest single natural gas customer, a one-sided relationship that has produced unwelcome geo-political consequences. Of the roughly 50 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas consumed in Ukraine each year, 30 bcm comes from Russia. The rest is supplied by the country's shrunken domestic gas industry. Part of the problem is that Ukraine remains among the least energy efficient countries in the world, a throwback to the days when energy was cheap and subsidized.

Poland provides a possible model on how to improve efficiency. By one main measure, Ukraine's neighbor to the west has reduced wastefulness far beyond the EU average. Its "primary energy intensity," defined as energy consumption relative to the size of the economy, has improved dramatically. "With only moderate energy saving, matching the endeavors of Poland, Ukraine could go down to a consumption of 30 bcm a year within five to 10 years," Anders Aslund of the Peterson Institute for International Economics told Canadian parliamentarians in May 2014.

Another way to promote Ukrainian energy independence is to resurrect abandoned gas fields, partly through the use of unconventional drilling. Multinational energy companies such as Chevron and Royal Dutch Shell predict the country harbors 10 bcm of these once hard-to-reach deposits. Though hydraulic "fracking" remains controversial in parts of Europe (gas is released from porous shale rock using blasts of water, sand and chemicals), it has helped turn the United States into a potential gas exporter and could do the same for some European countries, energy experts say.

The proposed construction of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal on the Black Sea in Odessa could also diversify Ukraine's imports, replacing piped Russian gas with ship-borne Middle Eastern and North American gas. "Ukraine could reach gas balance in five years, even if it is not likely, and it could be oversupplied in five to 10 years," Aslund noted in his 2014 testimony.

PROGRESS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU has made large strides since the dark days of 2009, when Russian gas destined for Europe was prevented from reaching Ukrainian pipelines. The 25 to 30 percent of its gas supply it receives from Russia represents a decline from just a couple years ago. Nevertheless, some EU members, clustered in Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, remain totally dependent on Russian gas shipments. (See chart)

In the past few years, the EU has engaged in an accelerated continentwide effort to build LNG terminals that, supplied with sufficient foreign imports, could theoretically displace Russian shipments in a few years. Qatar, a major Middle Eastern producer, exports increasing amounts of LNG to Europe and now supplies close to 10 percent of the EU's needs. The U.S. and Canada have both been touted as sources of European gas, at least in its liquefied form, but the high price of trans-Atlantic shipping and lack of export terminal capacity in North America have crimped such designs.

A Romanian flag flies in 2014 atop the first shale gas exploration site, in Pungesti, Romania, near the Moldovan border. Multinational energy giant Chevron has permits to explore for gas in northeastern Romania and on the Black Sea coast.
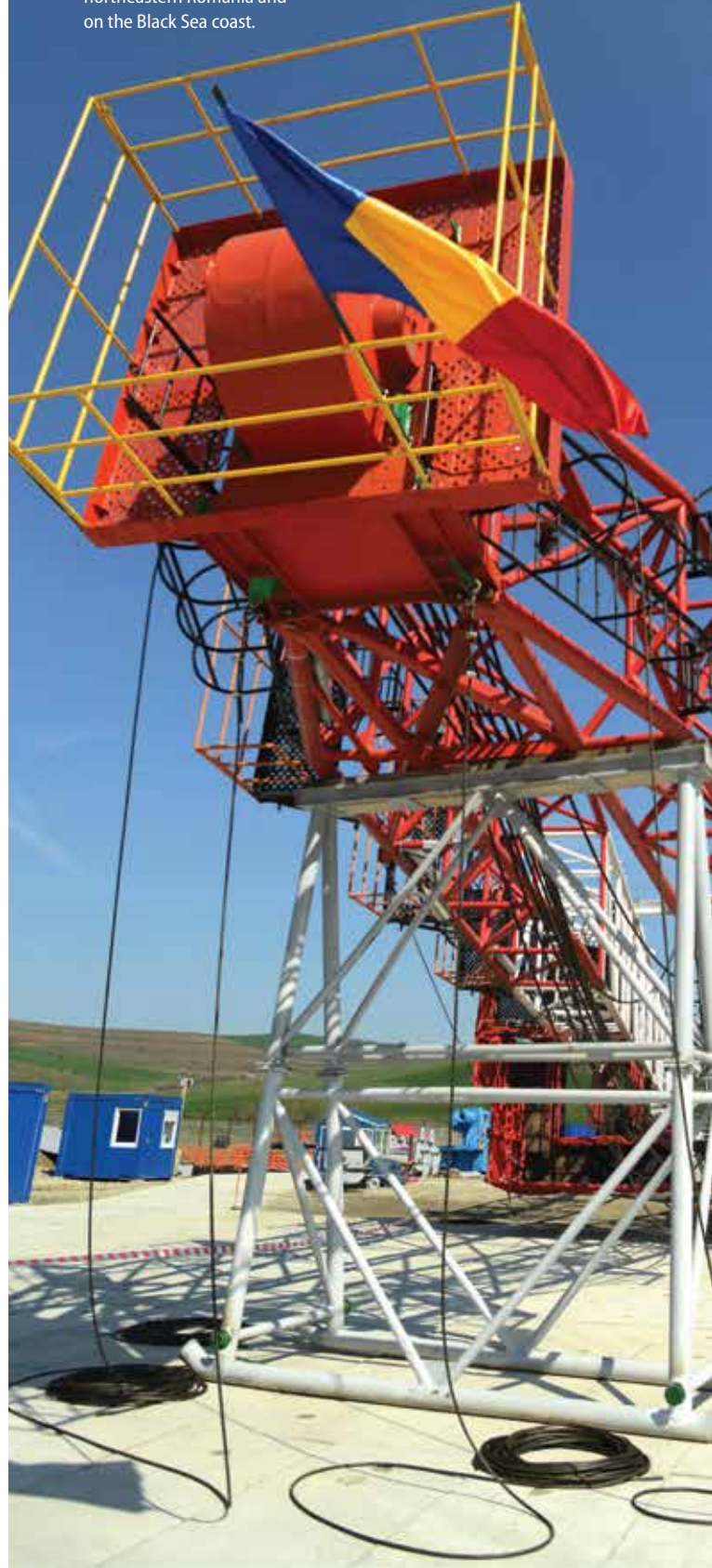
EU Imports of Russian Gas

Russia is Europe's biggest gas supplier, providing about a third of continental demand. Russia exports 300-450 million cubic meters per day to the EU, of which 40% is exported through the Ukraine.

NATURAL GAS CONSUMPTION
From Russian natural gas

0   0.1   25   50   75   100%

*Not a member of the EU

FINLAND
ESTONIA
SWEDEN
LATVIA
Nord Stream
LITHUANIA
NETHERLANDS
BELGIUM
DENMARK
IRELAND
Yamal
U.K.
RUSSIA
GERMANY
POLAND
Kiev ■
CZECH REP.
SLOVAKIA
UKRAINE*
AUSTRIA
FRANCE
HUNGARY
CROATIA
ROMANIA
SLOVENIA
ITALY
BULGARIA
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
GREECE

Russian exports through Nord Stream and Yamal 60%

Russian exports through Ukraine 40%

Source: Gas Infrastructure Europe, Reuters, industry data

Germany's focus on building renewable energy infrastructure, particularly solar panels and wind turbines, has proven to be a costly investment. But happily for Europe's largest economy, on sunny and windy days, these renewable sources can fulfill a large percentage of electricity demand, although backup power plants, usually fueled by gas and coal, are still necessary. This partial shift toward renewable energy is enshrined in the EU's 20-20-20 energy targets — a 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, 20 percent better energy efficiency and 20 percent greater usage of renewable energy by 2020.

The politically charged issue of gas pipelines continues to rear its head as well. Germany gets a quarter of its gas from Russia, much of it through Gazprom's recently built NordStream Pipeline across the Baltic Sea. But the EU is also throwing support behind plans for a series of interconnected pipelines to connect southern Europe to the Caspian Sea. Projects such as the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline could deliver relatively inexpensive Central Asian and Azerbaijani gas to Italy and the Balkans by as early as 2019.

Meanwhile, the EU has begun overhauling pipelines so that gas can flow in two directions instead of one. For example, Eastern European countries facing interruptions of Russian gas could readily tap surplus Western European gas through so-called interconnectors. "The EU has done far more than the U.S. over the last decade to modernize its energy infrastructure and diversify its supplies," *Forbes* magazine declared in April 2014.

CONCLUSION

Russia is financially dependent on its European gas sales. One-quarter of its economic activity is generated from such sales, not to mention nearly two-thirds of its total exports. But recent Ukrainian history, including the severing of Gazprom shipments during the depths of winter in 2009, suggests reliance on single sources of foreign gas is a risky proposition.

As a cleaner-burning fuel, gas will remain a large part of Europe's energy mix. That's why securing diverse supplies of the fuel is so critical. Exploitation of domestic sources of gas, including deposits recoverable by fracking, is viewed as a critical part of the continent's push for energy security. So is building pipelines to the Caspian Sea and importing liquefied gas from the Middle East, Africa and North America.

And in a country such as Ukraine, where energy conservation has been a low priority, boosting efficiency in homes and factories is every bit as critical as finding new gas supplies. Poland's success at doing just that can serve as a model.

"The EU internal gas market has further integrated since 2009 and is now better equipped to face external shocks. In particular, additional gas interconnectors, reverse flow capacities, storage sites and LNG facilities have already and will further enhance the security of EU gas supplies," a March 2014 report from the Brussels-based Centre for European Policy Studies noted. "Yet, some regions remain more vulnerable than others." □

A TACTIC AGAINST TERROR

Findings from Spain and Turkey suggest ethnic-based terrorism wanes when states pursue reconciliation

By *per Concordiam* Staff

Thousands march in Bilbao, Spain, in support of a cease-fire proclaimed by Basque terror group ETA in 2010.
AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Ethnic conflicts that breed terrorism have been a feature of the European landscape for decades. Examples include the Irish Republican Army in the United Kingdom, the Basque ETA in Spain, the Kurdish PKK in Turkey, and Northern Caucasus terrorist movements in Russia. In each case, the nations afflicted by ethno-terrorism resorted to military force to stem the violence, only to discover that the hard-power approach was insufficient to end the struggle.

A study released in 2013 suggests "soft-line" counterterrorism policies that target cultural grievances are the best long-term approach to neutralizing ethnic-based terrorism. In a work titled *PKK and ETA: A Comparative Analysis of Resolution Policies in Europe*, Irfan Çiftçi of the Turkish National Police argued that a program focused on reconciliation rather than retribution initially increases terrorist violence but ultimately provides overall greater stability.

He focused his analysis on the experiences of Turkey and Spain, two countries that spent decades fighting ethnic-based terrorists while simultaneously evolving into participatory democracies.

"When the country continued to implement its soft-line policies targeting the ethnic grievance and reached the status of a well-established democracy, the level of violence considerably decreased in the long run since public support for the terrorist organizations was eliminated thanks to those governmental policies," Çiftçi noted in an academic dissertation on the same topic in 2013.

THE CASE OF SPAIN

In the early 1960s, Spain's ETA (known in English as Basque Homeland and Freedom) announced its arrival on the world stage by attempting to derail a Spanish train. The then-government of Francisco Franco responded by using military force and repression against the Basque separatists. While providing some short-term successes, such hard policies ultimately failed to resolve the problems separatists invoked to justify violence.

It wasn't until Spain began transitioning to democracy after Franco's death in 1975 that the country embarked on a series of reconciliation policies to address the Basque grievances that fueled the independence movement. Following approval of a new democratic constitution in 1977, Spain promoted the Basque language, granted the province autonomy and devolved power to a regional Basque parliament. The country's accession to the European Community, predecessor to the European Union, accelerated this trend toward protection of minority rights.

But as the Spanish government learned to its disappointment, the concessions it granted the Basque provinces didn't pay immediate peace dividends. For years afterward, the ETA escalated its violence, using bombs to target civilians. The death toll rose.

But public perceptions were changing. As author Frederick Babb wrote in a 2008 profile on the ETA: "The Spanish populous became fully aware that ETA was not the knights in shining armor they had thought. ETA, instead of using democracy to re-establish the dialogue of independence, became entrenched in continuing their killings."

In 2010, Spain's patience appeared to pay off when the ETA proclaimed a permanent cease-fire. For Çiftçi, the ETA's renunciation of violence was proof that decades of democratic engagement had finally succeeded where military force alone had failed.

THE CASE OF TURKEY

The PKK, based in Turkey's southeastern provinces where the Kurdish population is plentiful, is responsible for thousands of deaths in its nearly 30-year terrorism campaign against Ankara.

As was the case in Spain, Turkey, fearing Kurdish autonomy would fracture the country, initially treated the PKK (known in English as the Kurdistan Workers Party) strictly as a military problem. But as Çiftçi notes in his report, Turkey's increasing democratization after 1995 coincided with attempts to woo Kurdish citizens with social, cultural and political reforms.

A "returning home" law allowed nonviolent supporters of the PKK to reintegrate without retaliation into Turkish society. An "active repentance" law granted amnesty and curtailed punishments for terrorists. The "Kurdish opening" of 2009 sanctioned the adoption of the Kurdish language on road signs, in schools and across the media.

In most cases, such concessions were followed by increased carnage. Çiftçi theorized that the PKK leadership, in a pattern recognizable from the Spanish ETA example, felt its influence slipping away and attempted to sabotage the reconciliation process by stepping up casualties.

LESSONS

Addressing ethnic grievances is the best way to counter violence in countries afflicted by this particular form of terrorism, Çiftçi suggested. He carefully pointed out that many Spanish and Turkish reconciliation policies were oriented not to the terrorists themselves, but to the aggrieved communities from which they gained their support.

Democratization that offers all citizens full participation in the electoral process is also critical. In the examples of both Spain and Turkey, the EU accession process inspired leaders to burnish their democratic credentials, including a deeper commitment to the rights of linguistic and ethnic minorities. Because the initial concessions were found to provoke more — not less — violence, persistence is critical. The PKK attacks that Turkey continues to suffer shouldn't provide an excuse to abandon Kurdish reconciliation, Çiftçi warned.

"Even if PKK violence increases to sabotage the current process, Turkey's democratization process should not be terminated," Çiftçi noted. "As we can see in the Spanish case, despite an increasing number of ETA attacks, the democratization process in Spain continued until the attacks were completely eliminated."

The findings could have implications for other terrorist movements in Europe, particularly those stemming from the struggle between separatists in the Caucasus and the Russian Federation. If Çiftçi's findings hold true

Then-Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, center, and the head of the autonomous Kurdish government in Iraq's north, Masoud Barzani, left, greet supporters in November 2013 in Diyarbakir, Turkey. Turkey has made overtures to Kurds in an attempt to end violence from the PKK.
AFP/GETTY IMAGES

outside of Spain and Turkey, confronting cultural and political grievances in Russian provinces such as Chechnya and Dagestan could help reduce hostilities.

"While the country is fighting terrorist groups within its territory on one hand, it should not neglect to implement democratic reforms meeting all citizens' democratic demands," Çiftçi said. "The states thus may solve their protracted ethnic conflicts in the long run." □

NETWORK *of* NETWORKS

THE MARSHALL CENTER'S EXTENSIVE ALUMNI LINKS

BY DEAN L. DWIGANS,
*director, alumni programs,
Marshall Center*

Working with and for the graduates of the Marshall Center resident programs is at the heart of the Marshall Center mission. The resident programs provide the foundation for what the Marshall Center hopes is a lifetime of professional engagement. This engagement is encouraged even before future alumni arrive, and its importance is evidenced by the substantial assets devoted to maintaining contact, providing useful resources and professional education opportunities, and creating an environment for the proliferation of professional networks. The goal of engagement is summed up in the overarching vision for the alumni program and for our graduates: connect, communicate and cooperate.

The existence of active and engaged professional networks is the most convincing sign of the success and impact of the Marshall Center. These networks are vast and include the larger network of more than 10,000 graduates; networks serving individual program graduates, such as the Program on Terrorism and Security Studies (PTSS) and Seminar in Transnational and Civil Security (STACS); regional alumni groups, such as the Marshall Center Alumni Association for Southeast European Security (MCAASEES); country alumni associations currently numbering 27; and smaller networks of individual courses and course seminar groups.

These networks make up the Marshall Center interconnected "network of networks" of professionals possessing, sharing and expanding on the knowledge, experiences,

norms and values, and mutual trust developed in a resident program.[1] This ultimately supports the Marshall Center mission of advancing democratic defense institutions and relationships; promoting active and peaceful engagement; and enhancing enduring partnerships among nations. It also supports the recently expanded mission to engage transnational issues, such as countering narcotics and illicit trafficking, and cyber security.

For networks to succeed, they must be used by the members and invigorated often with opportunities to grow, meet and share knowledge. The Marshall Center Alumni Programs Office focuses on this, though Marshall Center leadership, faculty and staff are also involved. The focus begins early with advance work, such as pre-readings, introductions and course orientation; is re-emphasized during the resident courses; and continues within the many networks with the support of alumni program events and activities and other Marshall Center resources, such as the research library.

Alumni program activities include Community of Interest (COI) events, regional alumni workshops, Outreach Networking Events (ONEs) and the Alumni Scholars Program. Remarkably, each year more than 1,600 alumni meet face-to-face at Marshall Center events to discuss important security topics and expand their individual networks. The Marshall Center benefits by absorbing invaluable feedback and lessons learned. Many more alumni gather each year within their networks at self-sponsored events.

COI events bring together alumni who are part of a network of security professionals based on completion of a resident program course or interest in a functional area. The intent of these 3- to 4-day events is to create and enhance professional networks of security practitioners within each resident program or topical area by merging graduates from across class years. In a recent typical COI, 30 nations and 24 different classes over more than 13 years were represented. Currently, COIs are in place for PTSS, STACS, the Program for Cyber Security Studies (PCSS) and the course Countering Narcotics and Illicit Trafficking (CNIT). Individual COI themes under consideration for 2015 include cyber security, countering corruption, countering terrorism and violent extremist organizations, countering transnational threats, illicit trafficking and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, interagency approaches to consequence management, developments in stability operations, and defense transformation as part of strengthening Euro-Atlantic security structures.

Regional alumni events sustain and strengthen the alumni network and alumni associations in a particular region, and vary in form and length. Building on this principle, graduates created the MCAASEES in 2012. Three annual regional alumni events are now designed to support the MCAASEES and an informal group of alumni leaders from Central Asia. The annual MCAASEES event for the leadership from the alumni associations of the 14 member countries and another event co-sponsored by the NATO Public Diplomacy Division take place in Southeast Europe

in 2014 and discuss regional security challenges. Also, a Central Asia regional alumni workshop will take place in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, for an informal group of alumni leaders from that region.

Outreach Networking Events are conducted in the region with area alumni to sustain and strengthen the network and support the 28 country and regional alumni associations. About 30 such events occur annually in the region, with attendance ranging from 10 to 250. Alumni from other regional centers are often invited, and some ONEs are joint events with other regional centers. Recent joint events occurred in Mongolia with the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies and in Uzbekistan with the Near East South Asia Center for Security Studies. These events provide opportunities to discuss important security issues in an interministerial forum and broaden the reach of alumni communities. The events often include distinguished members of a country's national security establishment and area embassy representatives who are not alumni.

The Marshall Center Scholars Program brings three to five alumni back to the Marshall Center for up to five weeks of research on an important regional security topic of interest to both the Marshall Center and each graduate's country or region. The goal is for these research projects to result in a collaborative faculty and scholar product for presentation or publication, some of which have been published in this magazine. To complete this research, a scholar is mentored by one or several faculty members and has full access to research library resources and assistance.

These and other events are supported by the rapidly growing use of the Marshall Center Web-based alumni portal, GlobalNET (https://members.marshallcenter.org). GlobalNET connects all Marshall Center alumni, staff, faculty and experts. It facilitates information sharing and collaboration in a secure online environment. This collaboration can be part of a resident course, an outreach event or a GlobalNET group dedicated to a topic or community of interest. The portal hosts all resident courses and alumni events and provides content delivery and discussion forums. It also hosts Virtual Communities of Interest (VCOIs): networks for specific programs and topics. VCOIs support all graduates after resident course completion, and their use is expanding, in particular for transnational energy security and countering narcotics and illicit trafficking.

GlobalNET also serves other regional centers, so alumni of multiple centers can expand their network and scope. Besides the ability to support courses, events and groups, GlobalNET provides access to various commercial databases to assist with resident course preparation and research, as well as research related to professional duties. The databases include more than 35 commercial research services provided by the Marshall Center Research Library for use by all alumni. Alumni find these resources invaluable for their professional needs because they offer significant added value that is often unavailable elsewhere. As with other social collaboration sites, GlobalNET allows users to create an extensive personal profile, which aids in sharing information regarding areas of expertise, experience and other information with others within the network.

GlobalNET holds the potential to expand the impact of Marshall Center programs. Virtual short courses are now being tested that could augment resident courses with pre-work and additional work outside the classroom during a resident course. Such programs could be offered to many in the region who are unable to attend resident programs.

Although the Marshall Center alumni program supports a robust schedule of activities and events, some of the best and most interesting work is being done by the 28 formal alumni associations. Plenty of examples illustrate this invigorating activity that promotes professional growth: creation of annual association work/activity plans (Macedonia); translation of Marshall Center publications into the local language for distribution within the defense ministry and academic community (Serbia and Macedonia); publication of annual security magazines (Moldova, Romania); and maintenance of association websites on which security newsletters and conference reports are published (Bulgaria, Macedonia, Georgia). Other examples include partnering with international organizations — Bosnia andHerzegovina with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), NATO and the United Nations Development Programme; Macedonia with NATO; and Montenegro with the University of Donja Gorica. Other events took place in Croatia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Equally important is the impact of Marshall Center graduates in the more than 100 countries without formal alumni associations. Of these, more than 400 graduates serve in key positions around the globe — as president or prime minister, speaker of parliament, minister, deputy minister, chief of defense, ambassador, member of parliament and other positions. They are also found as members of important organizations and committees, such as the European Union, OSCE, United Nations, NATO, EUROPOL and INTERPOL. In addition, hundreds are posted to embassies and deployed in other operations around the world.

The existence of a robust "network of networks" is a key outcome of Marshall Center programs and efforts. The true impact of 21 years of Marshall Center graduates and programs is difficult to measure and quantify. Much of it is the energy and level of continued engagement visible every day within the networks the Marshall Center has created, sustained by the alumni with their shared knowledge, experiences, norms, values, and mutual trust developed in a resident program.[2] Few organizations are able to achieve that kind and degree of enduring impact. ◻

1. Eliza Maria Markley, "Building social capital in the global security context: A study at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies," http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/incm_etd/1/
2. Ibid.

A NEW KIND OF WARFARE

Book author: Dr. David Kilcullen, Oxford University Press, October 2013
Reviewed by: Jack Guy, Joint Special Operations University

As I read David Kilcullen's new book, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla*, I was both excited and dismayed. Excited because someone was looking to the future while applying lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan in terms of the human terrain and the forces that affect behaviors and decision-making of populations; dismayed for fear that we will not incorporate these lessons into our thinking and planning while relying on the advocates of kinetic operations to "shoot our way to victory." The dangers of policies constructed based on polling, the ease of kinetic operations, and the inhibiting nature of stovepiped thinking are too evident today. Calling for a more measured approach, Kilcullen, one of our most notable military thinkers on counterinsurgencies and terrorism, offers a tightly argued look at the future and the impact that social, cultural and economic forces at work today are having on the present and the future. His understanding of the human terrain and his ability to translate this into a provocative look directed at the problems we are facing make this an important book for social scientists, urban and military planners, and above all, government policymakers.

Since 9/11, the United States and its coalition allies have been involved not only in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but in global operations in search of terrorists and malign groups. Afghanistan has surely influenced our worldview the most. It has dragged on the longest. The "nonexistent" Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) has become the "place to be" for our young special operators. Kilcullen, however, cautions us not to see warfare in terms of secluded, mountainous venues where we conduct missions to search and destroy, nab or chase various "jackpots," thinking this is how to conduct counterterrorist or counterinsurgency operations. And it is from these mountains that he wants us "to drag ourselves — body and mind." In his new book, he takes a critical and rather prescient look at the dramatically changing environment of the urban world and the forces shaping these densely populated, dystopian cities.

The forces of unfettered population growth, urbanization and littoralization dominate many parts of the world. Add to this the impact of new technologies that allow even the poorest to afford smartphones and Internet connections, thereby increasing their connectivity with each other and the rest of the world, one can understand how an antigovernment fighter in Syria can be schooled on weaponry by an online acquaintance halfway around the world. Each of these trends is worthy of discussion and study individually, but Kilcullen masterfully connects them and observes the synergies they create, the problems they foretell, and the complexities that will arise for policymakers tasked with dealing with them. Add to this his unique understanding of insurgencies, terrorist activities, the social dynamics of city life and the myriad complexities that forge the discontent these populations feel, and the reader realizes he must think about these issues differently.

Sprawling megacities and the surrounding urban and "peri-urban" areas that honeycomb the littorals of the world find themselves challenged with high unemployment, a lack of basic resources, crime and increasing discontent. Kilcullen reports that "in 2012, 80 percent of the world's populations [lived] within sixty miles of the sea, while 75 percent of large cities were on a coast." These cities often have little connection to their nation-states and must fend for themselves, becoming what Richard Norton calls "feral cities." Feral cities have more than a million people in nations that have "lost [their] ability to maintain the rule of law yet remain a functioning actor" within the world at large. And imagine the dangers brought about by strong nonstate actors and groups that can begin to contribute to a functioning city while disease, black markets, organized crime, drug trafficking, fundamentalists and minimal resources are the order of the day. Kilcullen points to cities such as Lagos and Mogadishu as examples and lists numerous densely populated cities where these characteristics prevail.

Additionally, we must deal with the proliferation of modern, Internet/cellphone technologies. People can communicate easily and inexpensively. Beyond this, phones tie users to the outside world in ways never

imagined. The Internet has had an extraordinary effect on the world, and especially upon youth. It offers a variety of news programs, connects people by email and social media, and presents educational websites of all types. It is no secret that al-Qaida uses the Web to recruit, train and develop plans. Imagine the differences that exist in terms of worldview throughout any country and how this affects the rural versus urban forces at work every day.

To understand social dynamics at play in these megacities, Kilcullen offers a unifying concept he calls "The Theory of Competitive Control." Centered in the concept of social normative systems, he suggests that populations gain a sense of security and predictability in response to services provided, no matter how brutally. Simply put, governments that do not govern create political and social vacuums that will be filled by others, most dangerously by nonstate armed groups and actors. Feral cities are ripe for these kinds of incursions. There we find odd mixtures of malign groups that include organized crime, drug lords and their cartels, local warlords and their militias, and religious fundamentalists of every ilk. These groups will "compete, coexist, or partner" to control the local population.

Take, for example, Hezbollah in Lebanon. Its power is a function of its coercive military power, its social and administrative programs for a wide range of poor and religious groups, and its "noncoercive political and propaganda capabilities." Moreover, since governments will continue to offer services, the populations will be dealing with numerous normative systems to include religious and local conventions that also offer services and must deal with all of them. Outsiders need to know how these systems work.

Examples based on Kilcullen's experiences and those of his Caerus teams in the field fill *Out of the Mountains.* He offers a look at the Arab Spring as a way to underscore some salient points. Although all examples are unique and no two revolutions are the same, the fundamental effects of the megatrends play their part. In Tunisia, for example, he connects technology (Facebook rather than Twitter) to the growing political unrest within the population. The Tunis area's population is 2.5 million and the national population is 10 million, but during the Jasmine Revolution, there were nearly 2 million Facebook accounts. About half of all Tunisians are online. These are staggering figures made all the more significant as he explains the connections between expat Tunisian hackers, or Taks; disaffected street youth, whose numbers were plagued by high unemployment and

highly aggressive football hooligans, or Ultras; and reform-minded activists, or Anons, in shaping the revolution from the outside and within. The virtual world allowed the Taks, Ultras and Anons to work together to cripple the government's websites and strategize effectively.

The implications of Kilcullen's compelling arguments should, of course, affect political, economic and military policy planners profoundly. But first, we must continue the maturation of our human terrain operations begun in Iraq and Afghanistan, paying close attention to the social sciences for guidance in understanding the changes brought about by societal forces. The intelligence community must lead the way, investing in smart, culturally trained practitioners who live in a world in which agents of change, such as urbanization, dramatically affect both the displaced populations from the rural areas and the people of the cities. Kilcullen's thesis demands sophisticated target audience analysis that is more than a counting game. In these instances, metrics are difficult to assess and require seasoned specialists who can deal in perceptions and behaviors and multiple variables to help us influence and shape particular groups in the hope they will eschew more radical actions.

Second, we must be in tune with new technologies that not only connect these populations internally, but also create virtual alliances among groups around the cyber world. As a tool, social media platforms have had a significant impact on the Arab Spring, on movements in Venezuela and Iran, and even on the unrest in western China. As the technologies continue to evolve, we cannot assume developing nations will find these too complex. In fact, our experience has shown just the opposite in South Asia and Africa.

Finally, we need to understand that our military's future is not in medium-intensity conflicts but in small, regional and local contests in densely populated urban miasmas saturated with religious, economic and social differences. Kinetic solutions will not suffice; indeed, they will be counterproductive in many cases.

As the U.S. "pivots" from the last 13 years of warfare, policymakers and planners must fully understand the nature of changes in the world. The forces driving these megatrends will continue to change our world, requiring that we understand their impact upon people, their cities and their needs. Conflicts will be small, vicious and often non-kinetic, and we must be capable of knowing and responding swiftly using the full range of our power, reserving the military only as a last resort. □
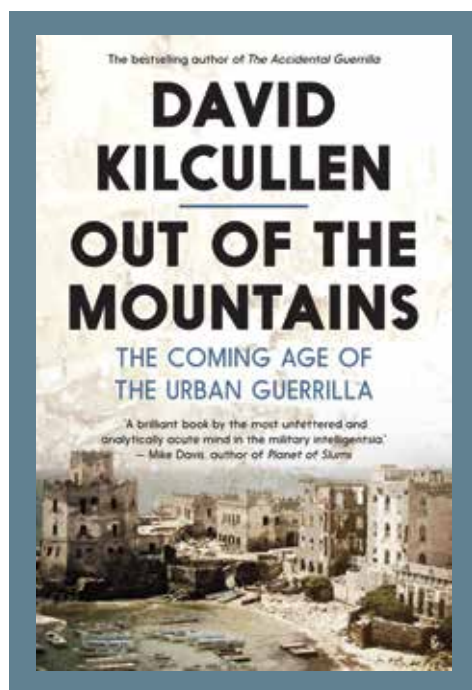
Resident Courses

Democratia per fidem et concordiam
Democracy through trust and friendship

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PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

The PCSS focuses on ways to address challenges in the
cyber environment while adhering to fundamental values
of democratic society. This nontechnical program helps
participants appreciate the nature of today's threats.

PCSS 15-1
Dec. 4 - 19, 2014

December						
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PROGRAM ON COUNTERING NARCOTICS AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING (CNIT)

The two-week resident program focuses on 21st-century
national security threats as a result of illicit trafficking and
other criminal activities.

CNIT 15-4
Apr. 9 - 24, 2015

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PROGRAM ON APPLIED SECURITY STUDIES (PASS)

The Marshall Center's flagship resident program, a seven-week course, provides graduate-level education in security policy,
defense affairs, international relations and related topics such as international law and counterterrorism. A theme addressed
throughout the program is the need for international, interagency and interdisciplinary cooperation.

PASS 14-9
Sept. 29 -
Nov. 14, 2014

September						
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PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

This four-week program is designed for government officials and military officers employed in midlevel and upper-level
management of counterterrorism organizations and will provide instruction on both the nature and magnitude of today's
terrorism threat. The program improves participants' ability to counter terrorism's regional implications by providing a common
framework of knowledge and understanding that will enable national security officials to cooperate at an international level.

PTSS 15-3
Feb. 25 -
Mar. 25, 2015

February						
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PTSS 15-7
July 9 -
Aug. 6, 2015

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SEMINAR ON TRANSATLANTIC CIVIL SECURITY (STACS)

STACS provides civil security professionals involved in trans-Atlantic civil security an in-depth look at how nations can effectively address domestic security issues that have regional and international impact. The three-week seminar examines best practices for ensuring civil security and preventing, preparing for and managing the consequences of domestic, regional, and international crises and disasters. The STACS will be offered once in FY 2015.

STACS 15-6
June 10 -
July 1, 2015

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SENIOR EXECUTIVE SEMINAR (SES)

This intensive five-day seminar focuses on new topics of key global interest that will generate new perspectives, ideas and cooperative discussions and possible solutions. Participants include general officers, senior diplomats, ambassadors, ministers, deputy ministers and parliamentarians. The SES includes formal presentations by senior officials and recognized experts followed by in-depth discussions in seminar groups.

SES 15-9
Sept. 14 - 18, 2015

September						
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SEMINAR ON REGIONAL SECURITY (SRS)

The three-week seminar aims at systematically analyzing the character of the example crises, the impact of regional actors, as well as the effects of international assistance measures. SRS 15-5 will concentrate on two traditionally unstable regions, looking at actual conflicts in the regions and efforts to achieve stability.

SRS 15-5
Apr. 30 -
May 21, 2015

April						
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PROGRAM ON SECURITY SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING (SSCB)

The purpose of this three-week course for midlevel and senior security-sector professionals is to assist partner and allied countries, as well as states recovering from internal conflict, to reform and build successful and enduring security institutions and agencies.

SSCB 15-2
Jan. 22 -
Feb. 12, 2015

January						
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