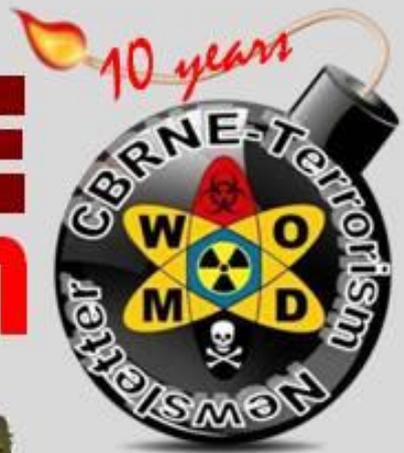


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Age, Nationality And Education Details Of Islamists Revealed In Leaked Report

Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2015/09/25/age-nationality-education-details-islamists-revealed-leaked-report/>

Elements of an analysis of Islamists who left Germany to travel to Syria and Iraq have been leaked ahead of official publication later this year. The results, intended for use by security agencies as a basis for preventing Islamic radicalization, are said to provide some surprises.

The study of Islamists was written by Germany's domestic security agency, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the Federal Criminal Office and the Hessen Information and Competence Center against Extremism.

It analyzed the 670 jihadists who left Germany for Syria and Iraq by June 2015. A

similar study based on 400 examples was produced last year, but the report's authors says this year's provides an entirely different "scope of information" reports *Deutsche Welle*.

The 11 pages of the report leaked to the media show the radicalization process begins in Germany. The study confirms that the internet was a factor in 30 per cent of cases, but other factors were more prevalent. Contacts in mosques accounted for the radicalization of 33 per cent of those studied, with friends responsible for 37 percent.

The least significant factor was prison recruitment, which accounted for just nine examples.

In half the cases, those leaving Germany reportedly joined Islamist groups abroad, with

78 per cent opting for Islamic State. In doing so they follow the trail blazed by German Islamists before them, such as that taken by Abu Omar al-Almani (pictured above, left) which *Breitbart London* previously reported.

234 of those studied have returned to Germany, although only 23 of them are now in prison.

Most German Islamists lived in cities before leaving and 21 per cent of those seeking to wage jihad overseas were women. As a whole the average was 25.9 years old and about a third had children, but in 80 cases the Islamists were just 15 to 18 years old.

409 of the 670 jihadists were born in Germany and 399 were German citizens, 160 of which held dual citizenship. The number of religious converts among the number was 114, most converting to Islam before they were 22 years old.

More than half of the German Islamists possess criminal records covering assault, theft, drug-related crime and sexual offenses.

It was noted that many were educated. 80 attended university, though most of those did not actually graduate, and 63 left for Syria or Iraq as soon as they left high school.

The authors of the report intend its findings to be used to inform a joint strategy to prevent and counter Islamic radicalization in Germany, but the results will be useful for similar efforts in other western European nations.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT: They know the numbers and the details of the 234 studied. Too bad that they let them return to Germany Now they have to allocate huge resources to watch them! Let people travel freely in Syria, Iraq, Libya etc but do not let them come back. These educational trips might harm hosting country and its citizens!

A Chinese aircraft carrier docks at Tartus to support Russian-Iranian military buildup

Source: <http://www.debka.com/article/24909/A-Chinese-aircraft-carrier-docks-at-Tartus-to-support-Russian-Iranian-military-buildup->

Sept 26 – As US President Barack Obama welcomed Chinese President Xi Jinping to the White House on Friday, Sept. 25, and spoke of

the friendship between the two countries, the Chinese aircraft carrier *Liaoning-CV-16* docked at



the Syrian port of Tartus, accompanied by a guided missile cruiser. This is revealed exclusively by debkafle.

led the US negotiating team for the nuclear talks with Iran, to announce that the Obama administration is ready for dialogue with Iran



Decontaminating Chinese Aircraft Carrier Liaoning CV-16

Beijing is not finding it hard to dance at two weddings, wooing the US for better relations, while at the same time backing Russia in its military intervention in Syria. Coupled with the warm smiles and handshakes exchanged at the lavish reception on the White House lawn, Beijing was clearly bent on showing muscle – not just in the South China Sea, but by allying itself with the Russian-Iranian political and military buildup in support of Syrian President Bashar Assad and his regime.

debkafle’s military sources report that the Chinese aircraft carrier passed through the Suez Canal on Sept. 22, one day after the summit in Moscow between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

When they talked, Putin made no mention of the Chinese warship entering the eastern Mediterranean or its destination. Its arrival has upended the entire strategic situation surrounding the Syrian conflict, adding a new global dimension to Moscow and Tehran’s military support for Assad.

This was grasped at length by US Secretary of State John Kerry. On Sept. 25, he sent Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, who also

about the situation in Syria, and this topic would be raised when Kerry’s met Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Jawad Zarif in New York on Sept. 26.

But if the top US diplomat hoped to bypass the Russian initiative in Syria by going straight to Tehran, he was too late. Iran is already moving forward fast to augment its military presence in the war-torn country, buttressed by the ground, air and sea support of two world powers, Russia and China.

This turn of events has a highly detrimental effect on Israel’s strategic and military position. It also strengthens Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in his determination to turn the nuclear deal concluded in July into a tool for isolating the US politically, militarily and economically in the Middle East, rather than a milestone on the road to a breakthrough in ties with Iran, as the Obama administration had hoped.

Our military sources find evidence that the Chinese forces are digging in for a prolonged stay in Syria. The carrier put into Tartus minus its aircraft contingent. The warplanes and helicopters should be in place on its decks by mid-November - flying in directly from China via Iran or transported by giant Russian transports from China through



Iranian and Iraqi airspace.

This explains the urgency of establishing a Russian-Syria-Iranian “military coordination cell” in Baghdad in the last couple of days. This mechanism, plus the Russian officers sighted in Baghdad, indicates that the Russian military presence is not limited to Syria but is beginning to spill over into Iraq as well.

The coordination cell - or war room - was presented as necessary to begin working with Iranian-backed Shiite militias fighting the Islamic State in both places. But more immediately, it is urgently needed to control the heavy traffic of Russian, Iranian and Chinese military flights transiting Iraqi air space.

Our sources report that the Chinese will be sending out to Syria a squadron of J-15 Flying Shark fighters, some for takeoff positions on the carrier’s decks, the rest to be stationed at

the Russian airbase near Latakia. The Chinese will also deploy Z-18F anti-submarine helicopters and Z-18J airborne early warning helicopters. In addition, Beijing will consign at least 1,000 marines to fight alongside their counterparts from Russia and Iran against terrorist groups, including ISIS.

debkafile’s counterterrorism sources point out that just as Russian marines will be instructed to single out rebel militias with recruits from Chechnya and the Caucasus, the Chinese marines will seek out and destroy Uighur fighters from the northern predominantly Muslim Chinese province of Xinjiang.

In the same way that Putin has no wish to see the Chechen fighters back in Russia, so too Chinese President Xi wants to prevent the Uighurs from returning home from the Syrian battlefields.

From Belgium to Syria and back: How an altar boy became an ISIL admirer

Source: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/3/5/how-one-belgian-went-from-altar-boy-to-isil-fan.html>



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March 5 – If the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant preaches the truth, why do most Muslims oppose it? “Because most Muslims go to hell,” answered the young man wearing a black hoodie adorned with a Kalashnikov and ISIL’s logo. “The hadith are clear. For every 1,000 [Muslims], 999 will enter hellfire.”

Michael “Younes” Delefortrie, 26, a former Catholic altar boy from a diverse Antwerp suburb, was [convicted](#) last month of belonging to a terrorist organization in a trial of 46 members of Sharia4Belgium, a group accused of recruiting young Belgians to fight in



Syria. Sentenced to three years of probation and under continued monitoring by the authorities, he sits nervously in a booth at a diner once frequented by the group.

He was answering questions from Palestinian researcher Montasser AlDe'emeh, who grew up in a refugee camp in Jordan and is studying ways of countering the appeal of extreme ideologies to at-risk youth. AlDe'emeh said he believes that exposure to a more sophisticated study of Islam can help some of those recruited by armed groups rethink their fanatical views. He engaged Delefortrie, who adheres to ISIL's interpretation of Sharia, in a spirited theological discussion on his harsh view of other Muslims — even citing the criticisms of ISIL by Al-Qaeda-associated ideologues.

Delefortrie stayed in Aleppo, Syria, for about five weeks, [according to court papers](#), and while there he posed for photographs with weapons and posted them on his Facebook page, where he named as his employers Jabhat Al-Nusra (the Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda's Syrian franchise) and "Revolusi [revolution] Dawlah Al-Islamiah [ISIL]." He said he told the court he returned to Belgium because he missed his wife and two children. Court documents noted that as a converted Muslim, he likely didn't enjoy much trust among the Syrian rebels.

Trained as a pastry chef, Delefortrie said he once worked in the restaurant; now his presence unnerves the owner, who avoids negative publicity generated by some of his erstwhile patrons. The meeting in the restaurant took place amid a tense atmosphere in the city. Military personnel patrolled the Jewish quarter in the aftermath of a [foiled plot](#) in the southern town of Verviers to attack police forces in February.

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About 470 Belgians are estimated to be fighting in Syria — the most per capita of any Western European country, [according to data](#) compiled by Pieter Van Ostaeyen, a Belgian researcher. The extraordinarily high concentration of recruits to ISIL and other violent groups has put the country in the international spotlight, leaving policymakers searching for a strategy to combat extremism.

AlDe'emeh is intimately acquainted with the social milieu from which many of these recruits have emerged. Children of more than 150 nationalities play on a square outside his fourth-floor apartment in Molenbeek, Belgium, where two of the Verviers attackers were from. And two weeks of field research embedded with Jabhat Al-Nusra in Syria has provided him with rare insights into the mindset of young Europeans attracted to such organizations.

Delefortrie's journey to an ISIL worldview hit a milestone in 2007, when he converted to Islam in search of the "more structured and quieter life" that had eluded him.

"You should have seen me before," he said, although he was loath to talk about his past and abhors the tendency to reduce decisions to convert to Islam as a response to adversity. He said he has always been religious: His grandmother's religious teachings and his time as an altar boy at Merksem's Catholic St. Franciscus Church — where a church administrator says he attended Mass every Sunday from age 8 into early adolescence.



“Religion is a refuge. Religion is a salvation. So is it unusual that many people convert after they’ve experienced difficulties? No, of course not,” he said.

Since his conviction on terrorism charges, it hasn’t been easy for Delefortrie to find work. He said his midlength beard does not sit well with his new boss, who urged him to “trim it a bit” — comments that, along with his father’s racial slurs about “brown” Moroccans, are part of what he says is a barrage of continuous assaults on his Muslim identity.

“I have to defend myself all the time,” he said. “But why should I renounce my own identity for my job?”

Delefortrie’s conversion to Islam came in the diverse suburb of Merksem after befriending Moroccan neighbors, with whom he smoked weed and socialized. But he later distanced himself from them over their failure to adhere to his stricter interpretation of his new faith, reproaching them for adjusting to Western ways and practicing their religion passively.

Books guided Delefortrie’s search for truth, he said, and at the restaurant, AIDe’emeh handed him a 497-page study by Dutch researchers, [“Islands in a Sea of Unbelief,”](#) on the workings of activist networks such as Sharia4Belgium and others in the Netherlands and Germany. Delefortrie was interviewed as a research subject in the book, one of the tools that AIDe’emeh believes might help change his extreme views.

Sharia4Belgium gained notoriety in 2011 by calling for the implementation of Islamic law in Belgium and organizing protests against bans on headscarves in many public schools and on wearing full-face veils in public. By the time Belgian authorities shut down the group’s operations in 2012, the first member had left to fight in Syria. Many have followed, citing a desire to help out brothers, expressing feelings of injustice and answering calls to global jihad, they said in videos on the group’s YouTube channel. Delefortrie joined Sharia4Belgium four years after turning to Islam, which, he said, offers a path to improve the character of its adherents.

AIDe’emeh expressed sympathy for Delefortrie for the challenges and lack of institutional support he faced but encouraged him to build relationships and keep a job in order to re-establish a life in Belgian society. And he nudged Delefortrie to give up the illusory promise of finding a peaceful life in ISIL’s caliphate.

“In my efforts to help these youth channel their frustrations, I hope that I can at least prevent them from hurting themselves and others,” AIDe’emeh said. “Imagine someone flips tomorrow, then polarization will become stronger in society, and I don’t want that.”

The risk of young Belgians flipping and staging their own assaults was illustrated in January after the police raid in Verviers disrupted a plot by two former fighters to kill Belgian policemen a week after the Paris attacks at the offices of Charlie Hebdo and a kosher supermarket.

Raising the national terrorism-alert level to 3, the second-highest degree, Prime Minister Charles Michel’s right-wing government [announced a 12-step counterterrorism plan](#) that included measures to tighten the country’s laws and revoke the passport of citizens who travel to war zones in Iraq and Syria. Soldiers were deployed to protect potential targets, and Internal Affairs Minister Jan Jambon proposed legislation to revoke the Belgian citizenship of dual nationals who travel to Syria — the majority of them born in Belgium to Moroccan parents.

Finding the right mix of punitive and preventive measures has proved challenging for the authorities. But social workers and policymakers in the town of Vilvoorde, near Brussels, believe they have found an effective balance. Although 28 people from the town have gone to fight in Syria, not one has left since May 2014, according to Mayor Hans Bonte. As a result, the mayor receives invitations from as far away as Washington, D.C., and Columbus, Ohio, to share the town’s recipe for combating extremism.

Vilvoorde’s formula? Bringing parents, friends, mentors and security personnel together to map possible recruits’ emotional well-being and devise a plan to reintegrate them into the community. This “injection of warmth” is paired with theological guidance provided by experts in Islam who can help alter people’s extremist outlook, Bonte said. There is no cookie-cutter profile of foreign fighters, he added. Those who have left Belgium for Syria include men and women from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, and their ages have ranged from 15 to 35. “What they all have in common is a feeling of rootlessness, of not belonging.”

Alienation and indoctrination are recurring themes in the stories of those lured to Syria, according to Vrije Universiteit Brussel researcher Bilal Benyaich. Sharia4Belgium encouraged its members to stop talking to their parents, quit school, grow a beard and



wear traditional Islamic clothing, according to court documents, and it offered them a place in an alternative community.

Delefortrie recalled the sense of camaraderie that developed as he took part in everyday activities with the group — eating meals, going to lectures, studying and shopping. “We did everything together,” he said.

Young Belgians from immigrant backgrounds may have their feelings of exclusion compounded by discrimination in the Flemish labor market. A [survey](#) that made headlines last month found that two-thirds of temp agencies heed clients’ wishes to refrain from hiring cleaning personnel of immigrant descent. A feeling of not belonging is felt more keenly in Flanders, the affluent, northern part of the country, where the vast majority of Belgium’s foreign fighters originate, according to Bonte.

But the currents of alienation run deeper. Belgium’s secular traditions have relegated religion to the private sphere, which has left the country’s social workers and teachers poorly equipped to engage with communities of faith.

Some of these people believe religious individuals are stuck in a “magical world,” said Elke Vandeperre, a coordinator of Motief, an Antwerp-based nonprofit that recently received funding from the government to combat radicalization. Only 1.5 percent of social workers engaging with youth are of immigrant descent, according to Benyaich.

“The real prevention lies in taking a good look at ourselves,” she said. “How can we make sure that these youth are stimulated in our educational system to think about how they want to contribute to society? If they permanently get the feeling of not being able to contribute from their own identity, things go wrong.”

Mosques haven’t proved particularly helpful in establishing connections with Belgium’s at-risk youth, experts say. Most imams don’t speak Dutch and deliver their sermons in Arabic or Turkish at small, makeshift mosques that aren’t recognized by the government, according to Benyaich. Some of these youths, searching for answers their imams can’t provide, then turn to the Internet, where extreme propaganda proliferates, according to AIDe’emeh.

But the key challenge facing social workers and the young people they work with is finding a way to integrate them into Belgian society — or at least to steer them away from the path of violence — without requiring them to cede their Muslim identity. “I couldn’t be myself anymore,” Delefortrie said about his decision to go to Syria. **“If you can’t be yourself anymore and can’t say what you think, then it stops there. Then you have to leave.”**

EDITOR’S COMMENT: This is how multicultural societies counter their problems. Something like using soap and water to change someone’s color of skin. “Then you have to leave” is what he says. Well I say: “You do not have to come back because we will not let you do so!” It seems that our societies are haunted by an ambition to make everybody like us. Wake up people! It did not work in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Vietnam and elsewhere and it will not work out in Europe. If those choosing Europe for their new home do not intend to incorporate and keep their heritage for themselves instead of visioning to enforce it to others, then the game is lost before it starts Simple as that!

Putin’s military intervention in Syria, explained

Source: <http://www.vox.com/2015/9/24/9392543/russia-syria-putin>

Sept 25 – Russia has moved a small but significant military force into Syria, adding a volatile new dimension to Syria’s now four-year civil war.

The Russian installation, in a couple of military sites along Syria’s Mediterranean coast, is far short of a full invasion force, but it’s still a meaningful escalation, potentially making Russia a direct participant in the war for the first time. Russia has moved in a few hundred troops, 28 fighter jets, and 14 helicopter gunships and transports, as well as six tanks, 15 artillery pieces, and some other equipment.

On the surface, Russia’s aim seems clear: to shore up Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad, a longtime Russian ally and proxy who has been doing poorly in the war, as well as to project Russian power in the world. In Washington, DC, Vladimir Putin’s escalation is being hailed as a brilliant strategic move and a humiliation for the US. (DC political pundits remain by far Putin’s most loyal fan base outside the former Soviet Union.)



But there's a lot more going on here than might first meet the eye. Not all of it has to do with Syria, and not all of it is good news for Russia or Putin or, certainly, for Assad. Here are six things to know about the Russian intervention in Syria, which help explain what's actually happening and what it means.

1) Russia's intervention is aimed partly, and maybe most of all, at Iran

Russia, once a global power with proxies in every corner of the globe, doesn't have many allies outside of the former Soviet republics these days. One of the last is Syria, which aligned with Moscow back in the 1970s when Bashar's father, Hafez al-Assad, was in charge.

Syria has long balanced itself between its two sponsors, Iran and Russia, often privileging the latter because it is more powerful and more important. That began to change in 2011 and 2012, when the Syrian civil war began. Assad relied on Russia's diplomatic protection against Western intervention, as well as Russian military hardware. But he came to rely much more on Iran, which provided not just hardware but military officers and boots on the grounds, as well as support from the Iran-backed Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

As the Syrian war dragged on, Bashar al-Assad became less of a Russian proxy and more of an Iranian proxy, with Tehran practically running Assad's war for him. Russia's traditional links to the Syrian army and intelligence became less important and less useful. In August 2013, Assad disobeyed Moscow, using chemical weapons against Russia's wishes.

It looked like Moscow was losing its last remaining foothold in the Middle East — and the Iranians, not the Americans or the British, were pushing them out. (Meanwhile, Iran also signed the nuclear deal, which Moscow worries could lead Tehran to ease ties with the West and thus become less reliant itself on Russian support.)

If Moscow wanted to retain its last toehold in the Middle East, it needed to shore up its influence in Syria, specifically with the Assad government. This military intervention makes Russia a significant player within Syria again. It forces Assad to once again rely on Moscow. It also changes things *within* the Assad regime, making military commanders and other types who have closer ties to Moscow more relevant.

All of this comes at the expense not of the United States (Americans like to see everything that happens in the world as primarily about America, but it's not always so), but rather at the expense of Iran. Russia and Iran are all still on the same side, but Moscow wants to protect its own influence and significance, and the biggest threat to that right now is Iran.

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2) This may also be about striking a grand bargain with the West

There is also a theory that Putin, in addition to reasserting and protecting Russian influence in Syria, is maybe hoping this will give him something he can use to strike a grand bargain with the US and Europe. There are two versions of this theory. One version says that Putin wants to stir up trouble in Syria, threatening Western interests there, in order to force the West to grant him concessions. Another version says that Putin believes he can offer Russian military assistance and intelligence against Islamist extremists in Syria as a prize to trade in exchange for Western concessions.

Personally, I find the latter more convincing; since he took office in 2000, Putin has consistently portrayed Russia and the West as natural allies against the threat of Islamist extremism, which state media has played up considerably. And recent noises out of the Kremlin suggest that Putin wants to present this as an opportunity for partnership with the West, not as Russia holding Syria hostage.

But regardless of which version of the theory you find more persuasive, the result is the same: that Putin would like to trade off Russian involvement in Syria for a grand bargain with the West, one that addresses not just Syria but Ukraine and Western sanctions against Russia — two issues far more important to Putin.

Mark Galeotti, a Russia scholar, points out that later this month, Putin will be speaking to the UN General Assembly for the first time since 2005. And Russian state media has suggested that Putin will meet, or at least try to meet, with Obama while there. There is speculation that Putin may use his address to publicly offer his grand bargain with the West, in which he would likely call for cooperation against terrorism (particularly in Syria), some sort of mediated settlement in Ukraine, and an end to Western sanctions on Russia.



3) This could backfire by making Russian troops a lightning rod for extremist groups

There are a few jihadist groups fighting in Syria, the biggest of which are ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Qaeda's local branch), and that are competing against one another for ideological legitimacy. Whichever group can best position itself as representing Sunni jihadism, the thinking goes, will get more recruits and donations, and thus win more territory on the battlefield.

If you are a jihadist group looking to claim the mantle of global jihadism, there have to be few targets as attractive as a foreign invasion force from a Christian empire. Those Russian troops and fighter jets might be safely based on the coast, far from the front lines, but they could become a real lightning rod for jihadist attacks.

Recall that ISIS, when it captured a Jordanian pilot who'd gone down after launching airstrikes against the group, videotaped its torture and murder of the pilot, using him as a major propaganda tool. And that was a pilot from a fellow Sunni Arab country. One shudders to imagine how eager ISIS, or another group like Jabhat al-Nusra, would be to get ahold of a Russian pilot — something that is made even more possible if Russia also uses the attack helicopters it's deployed to Syria, much less its small force of ground troops.

In 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan inspired a mass jihadist call to arms from across the Muslim world to fight the non-Muslim invaders. So did the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. This Russian intervention is much, much smaller, and the reaction will likely be smaller as well, but jihadist groups may still try to exploit it by targeting Russian forces.

This doesn't just put those Russians at greater risk. It gives Syria's often fractured extremist groups a cause to rally behind, something that can temporarily bring them together even as they continue fighting one another elsewhere in the country.

4) Russia has little ability to escalate

Some of the commentary on Russia's intervention has expressed concern that although the initial force



is relatively small, perhaps Russia will build it out into a larger invasion that can really change the overall trajectory of the war.

But geography will get in the way of that. Logistically, it is not really feasible for Russia to significantly increase the size of its force and thus escalate its position in Syria. Russian military flights to Syria have to get there somehow, but that requires flying over countries that bar such flights.

Russia cannot ship the equipment there via its navy without being spotted as it passes through Turkey, and

even if it wanted to move in its equipment in broad daylight, this would be difficult, expensive, and time-consuming, if it's even within Russian capabilities.

In other words, while this deployment does matter on its own, do not expect Russia to do what it did in Ukraine, and quietly sneak in enough military equipment to radically alter the military balance on the ground.

5) This is not yet a game changer for Syria...

Putin's escalation in Syria is being overhyped a bit in the press. Partly this is because it's Putin, with whom Americans have sort of an obsession, eager to see his weaknesses as



strengths and portray his often shortsighted and reactive foreign policy as the work of a strategic genius. Partly Russia's escalation is also getting overhyped as people in Washington view it through the lenses of various preexisting opinions. People who see President Obama as a bumbling weakling are often eager to hold up Putin as the counterpoint, the strong leader whose bold decisiveness humiliates our own feckless leader. People who wish for the US to intervene in Syria may be more willing to see the Russian force as a decisive because it supports their view that outside intervention can be a game changer.

But ultimately this is not yet a game changer for the Syrian civil war. It is not a large enough force to turn the tide of the war, particularly as the war remains split four ways between Assad, Kurdish groups, ISIS, and non-ISIS rebels.

Russia's force does make it much harder for the US or another Western power to launch its own on-the-ground intervention force in Syria. These forces would not be on the same side, and neither Russia nor the US wants to risk World War III over Syria by putting themselves in a position to directly fight one another, either deliberately or accidentally. But the truth is that a Western ground intervention in Syria was probably never going to happen anyway, so this only changes things by ruling out something that already had been ruled out.

6) ...Unless Russia begins bombing US-backed Syrian rebels

All that said, there is one way that this could escalate: if Russia's air power in Syria begins attacking Syrian rebels who are supported by the United States.

Russia is there to protect Assad, after all. While the US has forbidden rebels trained under its Pentagon program from fighting Assad's forces, Assad might nonetheless deem them a potential threat worthy of Russian bombing. Something else that complicates this: Russian state media coverage of Syria has been extremely simplistic, conflating ISIS and al-Qaeda with more moderate rebel groups, making it more politically difficult for Russian to bomb one group but not another.

If Russia begins attacking US-backed Syrian rebels, that will put the US and Russia at odds in Syria. While not quite a Cold War-style proxy conflict, it would still be an added degree of danger and instability in the relationship between the world's two leading nuclear powers, making any international settlement over Syria harder and adding strains over the conflict in Ukraine.

The "good" news is that there are very few US-backed Syrian rebels for Russia to bomb right now. But if the US increases its Syrian rebel training program, perhaps through the quieter CIA effort or perhaps under a subsequent presidential administration, then Syria will have the potential to include Russian forces fighting a US-backed proxy. That is still just a hypothetical, but it's a concerning one.

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Russian Forces in Syria: Let Putin Bleed

By Steven A. Cook

Source: <http://www.newsweek.com/russian-forces-syria-let-putin-bleed-376901>

Sept 26 – Early September brought the news that the Russians were deploying military forces to Bassel al-Assad International Airport near Latakia on the Syrian coast.

The Aviationist website recently reproduced satellite imagery showing 28 combat aircraft, including four Sukhoi Su-30SM multirole (air-to-air and ground interdiction) fighters, 12 Sukhoi Su-25 attack planes and 12 Sukhoi Su-24 attack planes.

In addition, the Russians have deployed 15 helicopters, nine tanks, three missile batteries, cargo planes, refueling aircraft and about 500 soldiers to the same airfield.

The Obama administration has not said much about the deployment, only that it was seeking

clarification from Moscow. Pentagon officials were generally mum on September 22 after Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter called his Russian counterpart, Sergei Shoigu, saying only that they are watching the situation closely.

The administration's critics and supporters have responded to these developments in ways one might expect—howling criticism or over-rationalization justifying why the presence of Russian forces in Syria is actually no big deal.

They both have it wrong, though.

Of course, the Russian buildup is a very big deal and marks a new, even more complicated



and potentially dangerous phase in the Syrian conflict, but that is precisely why we should welcome it.

Last weekend I heard former British Foreign Secretary David Miliband explain that the Russian deployment was a function of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's weakness, of which Moscow has become all too aware. Under these circumstances the deployment should be seen as an elaborate Russian maneuver to improve its negotiating position in the inevitable diplomatic solution to the Syrian crisis, which, while not including Assad himself, will have to include "regime elements."

In Miliband's estimation the Russians are ready to dump Assad in return for American flexibility on the nature of the post-Assad ruling coalition. Miliband is hardly an outlier. I have heard or read variations of these claims on any number of occasions, and each time they ring hollow.

They are interesting reflections of what we think the Russians would be doing if the Russians were us.

It reminds me of late February 2014 when all the smart kids were saying that Russian President Vladimir Putin would not be so stupid as to take over Crimea and that he merely sought to pressure and manipulate Ukraine from the outside.

Those might be things that we would do, but they were never part of Putin's playbook. Even as that big, creepy, crying bear was being pushed around the closing ceremony of the Sochi Olympics and I was being told that the Russians were full of bluster and not much else, they were gassing up the tanks.

More directly, Moscow has been fairly clear about its intentions in Syria, no? According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Russia's growing military presence in Syria is intended to combat the self-declared Islamic State and defend the Syrian state.

Two caveats are in order here. First, the Russians could be lying, but they really have no reason to dissimulate, confident that the United States is going to accept the Kremlin's *fait accompli* just as it has in Ukraine. **Second,** Miliband may be correct; Russian statements have referred specifically to the "Syrian state" and not the Assad regime, which Kremlinologists of yore might interpret as an implicit nod to the confluence of Russian and American interest in a unitary Syrian polity. We'll see.

All this is a long wind up to the idea that while the West should not exactly learn to love Russia's intervention in Syria, the United States, Europeans and the Gulf states might actually come to like it.

Moscow may think it is somehow calling Washington's bluff in the fight against the Islamic State, but folks should separate out the Russian bluster and the political posturing of Obama administration opponents and supporters on Twitter and consider the serious implications of the Kremlin's move.

The Russians just put themselves squarely in the middle of an extremely nasty, brutish civil war featuring a grab bag of extremist groups that includes the Islamic State (ISIS), which would likely love to take a shot at the Russian military.

If the reports of large numbers of Chechens filling the ranks of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's forces are accurate, it is payback time. Those jihadists are arrayed against Moscow's allies, a nefarious group that includes Hezbollah, Assad's militias, what is left of the Syrian military and agents of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

If the risks to the Russians in this environment are not clear, they should be. They are no longer an indirect party to the conflict, they have a huge target on their backs and they are going to have a serious fight on their hands that does not seem to favor Russian forces.

Sure, Syria in 2015 is not Afghanistan in 1979, and one would think that the Russians have learned lessons from their painful past, but Putin seems to have drawn all the wrong lessons from the late Soviet period.

This is not to suggest that Washington should continue to wash its hands of Syria.

There seems little chance that the Obama administration or the next one will commit (beyond general rhetoric) the United States to bringing about the end of the Assad regime, but they should do everything to help the refugees fleeing Syria's hellish conflict.

There seems to be no reason to match the Russians militarily there, however. Everything in foreign relations is linked, and it is precisely because Russia is a major strategic threat and because of the Kremlin's adventurism in Ukraine, which threatens NATO allies like Poland and the Baltic states, that I welcome Moscow's coming entanglement in Syria.

Let Putin bleed.



Steven A. Cook is the Hasib J. Sabbagh senior fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: "Let Putin bleed." This is all it is about! Who cares about the bloodshed in this ME country and the human flow towards Europe? It is just another strategic game that players are trying to predict the next move on chess-board and act accordingly to win the match... But great powers are judged by their decisions and interventions on historical moments and situations. And so far only Russia is the best candidate for this title.

Crying lone wolf? Fires used in warfare, terrorism

By Markos Kounalakis

Source: <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/op-ed/markos-kounalakis/article35616318.html>



12

Terror strikes at the heart of anyone who faces a wall of fast-moving fire. Last week's Northern California Butte and Valley fires remind everyone of the fear and destruction that follows any raging blaze, regardless of how it starts.

The cause for these fires kindled around Sept. 11 appears to be a bad combination of accidental factors and not arson. But the devastating inferno on this terrorism anniversary raises quiet, yet uncomfortable questions regarding past and future criminal intent – and perhaps international terrorist activity – in wildfires.

While arson was not involved in the Butte and Valley fires, it remains the overall stated goal of radical extremists and organizations like al-Qaida to burn down our house.

The U.S. government actively does more than we know to prevent random acts of terrorism, but a lone-wolf arsonist is a real threat and as tough to stop as a rampaging fire is hard to tamp.

Making matters worse, California and the Western states have become highly flammable tinderboxes as a result of drought and climate change, making them extremely vulnerable to bad actors with worse intentions.

The threat of international arson terrorists is not idle. Al-Qaida is well aware of the virtually unprotected nature of the West's extensive forests and grasslands and has specifically targeted them for attack.

Around the same time as the unsolved, mysteriously suspect and highly destructive Waldo Canyon, Colo., fires in the



summer of 2012, the Department of Homeland Security published an unclassified report titled "Terrorist Interest in Using Fire as a Weapon." The findings are, appropriately, terrifying:

"International terrorist groups and violent extremists have long shown interest in using fire as a weapon due to the low cost and limited technical expertise required, the potential for causing large-scale damage, and the low risk of apprehension. Recent encouragement of use of this tactic by terrorist groups and violent extremists in propaganda materials and extremist Web forums is directed at Western audiences and supports Homeland attacks."

Montana is al-Qaida's favored forested area due to its open wilderness and low population density. A few years back, Inspire, an online jihadi magazine, encouraged al-Qaida sympathizers in the West to deploy DIY "ember bombs."

Montana's valleys may be enticing to global arsonists, but California is particularly susceptible with its statewide extra-dry sylvan stands and the Southland's flame-fanning Santa Ana winds. An uncontrollable firestorm is only a spark away.

Wildfires are nearly all started by humans, but the indiscriminate burning that ensues does not discern if the culprit is a tossed cigarette, exploded incendiary device or fateful lightning strike. Unsurprisingly, fire is one of the world's oldest and most effective weapons of war. Laying waste to enemies by burning down their habitats is as old as recorded history.

Fire is sometimes used strategically, as punitive destruction, to weaken an enemy and

destroy its resources and will to fight – as when the Nazis firebombed England during the Blitz in World War II or when the allies in turn firebombed Nazi Germany's Dresden.

In wartime, fire is also used tactically with scorched-earth policies employed operationally to make sure nothing of military or economic value is left behind to help adversaries battle. As Iraqi forces retreated from Kuwait during the Gulf War in 1991, they set oil wells ablaze in their wake in classic scorched-earth fashion.

Targeted and controlled thermal warfare began with Greek Fire, a Byzantine military development aiming water-resistant flames at an adversary's flotilla. "Greek Fire was first used to break the Muslim navy's seven-year siege of Constantinople in AD 673," writes military historian Adrienne Mayor.

Burning down the entire U.S. West Coast was the goal of the Japanese during World War II with "Fire Balloons," considered the first intercontinental bombs. These incendiary devices were hydrogen-filled balloons released in Japan intended to burn down the forests and cities on America's Pacific Coast. Thankfully, only one of those devices is known to have caused fatalities.

Everyone hopes the current California blazes were started innocently. The next Western firestorm is just around the corner, however, and its ignition may be intentional and criminal. The Department of Homeland Security is absolutely right about this: "If you see something, say something!"

In a perfect world, fear itself should be the only thing we fear. Unfortunately, fire should be added to that short list.

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Markos Kounalakis is a research fellow at Central European University and visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution. Contact him at markos@stanford.edu and follow him on Twitter @KounalakisM.

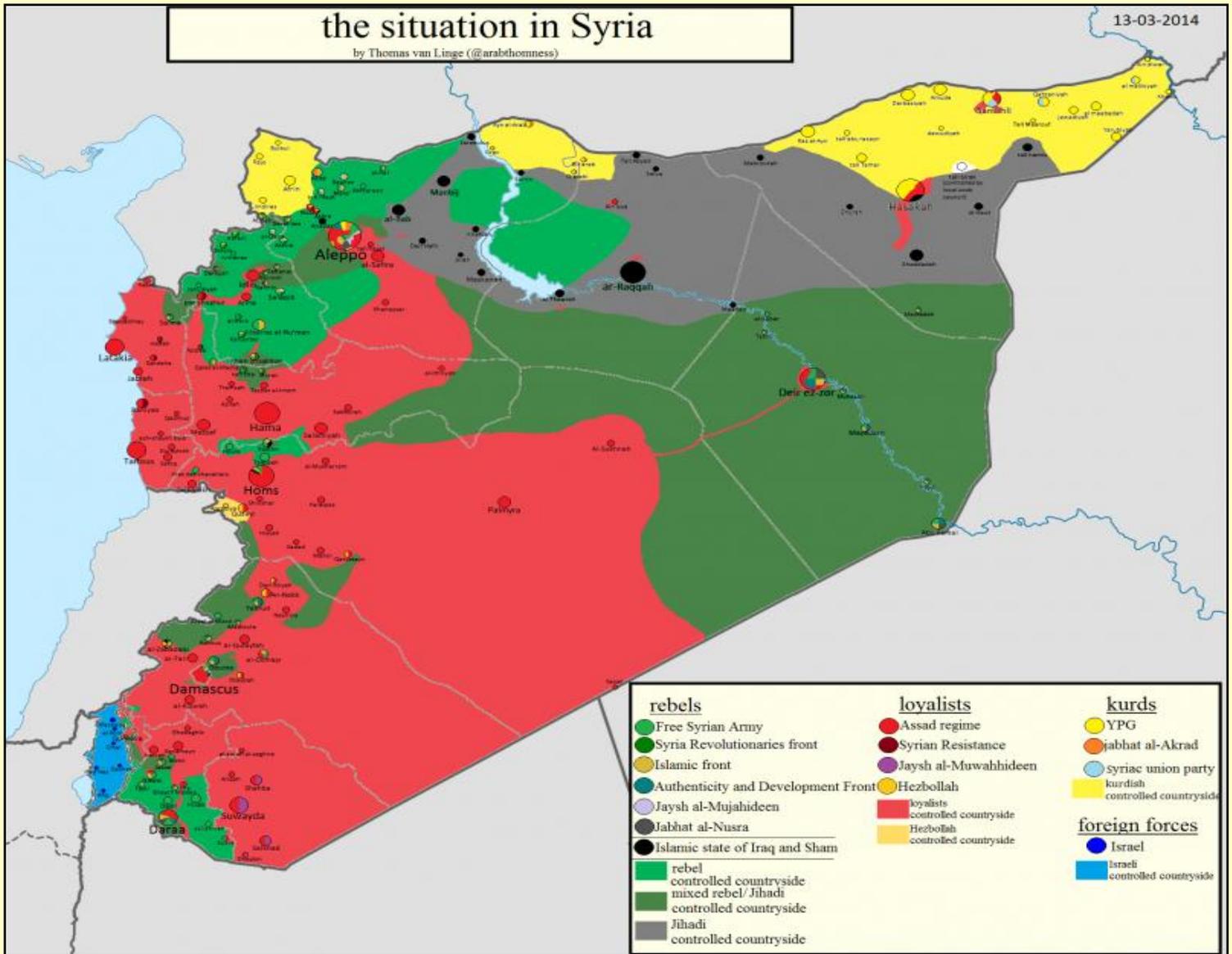
19 Year Old Maps The Middle East Wars

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2015/09/19-year-old-maps-the-middle-east-wars/>

It's not easy to track what is going on in the civil war in Syria, it being so dynamic and turbulent. Researchers in intelligence and security services around the world collect data every day via satellites, cameras, spies and reports from the field to construct a full picture. But they are not the only ones fervently tracking ISIS' activities, whether it is taking over a beach in Libya or a bloody struggle against the Syrian Kurds. Thomas Van Linge, 19, is also keeping an eye on the terror organization's movements.



Though just graduated from high-school, he already knows better than most where the Jihadists are headed, what areas they have managed to conquer and where they have been pushed back. Thomas



has created some of the best maps of the battle areas from inside his bedroom in Amsterdam, without ever having visited Syria, Iraq or Libya and having learned Arab using Youtube. Thomas not only knows what ISIS is up to, but what rebels of the Free Syrian Army, al-Nusra Front and Lebanon's Hezbollah are doing. In Libya he's monitoring the Zintan Brigades, in Nigeria he's watching Boko Haram, in Eastern Ukraine he's keeping an eye on the separatists. His maps are so accurate that CNN, the New-York Times and Der-Spiegel are using them. Why is he so interested in any of this and how has he managed to collect more data on the war in Syria than a professional cartographer? In answer to that question, Thomas says that he thinks everyone should be doing what they love. According to him, he was watching the news about the Arab Spring in Egypt and decided to research the civil war in Syria for a school project. He was looking for a map of Syria on Google and began inputting front lines and rebel groups. He used different colors. He established contact with activists and gained their trust. They, in turn, sent him information. Then he continued tinkering with the map. In January 2014, he released it for the first time on his Twitter account and now has 14,000 followers from around the world checking his updates and information. Furthermore, he has contacted warriors in the front, reporters, and human rights organizations and claims that he uses more than 1,100 sources for the maps.



It's quite amazing to see an interest in a specific area and the open information provided by the internet can turn anyone into a regular P.I. It is, however, certainly best to be cautious when relying on any information on the internet and consult further sources.

Egypt's War on Terrorism Bears Fruit

By Khaled Abu Toameh

Source: <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/6559/egypt-war-on-terrorism>

Sept 26 – Egypt began this week flooding smuggling tunnels along their border with the Gaza Strip with water from the Mediterranean Sea -- a move being condemned by Hamas and other Palestinian factions as a "disturbing nightmare."

The Egyptian army's move is another sign of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's determination to destroy the tunnels that were used to smuggle weapons, people and merchandise from Sinai to the Gaza Strip and the other way around.

This act is also a sign of Sisi's resolve to pursue his military campaign against Islamist terror groups that are waging war against the Egyptian authorities in Sinai. The Egyptians are convinced that Hamas and other Palestinian groups have been providing aid to the terror groups in Sinai.

Since the beginning of the year, dozens of Egyptian soldiers and police officers have been killed in a spate of terror attacks launched by Islamist groups in Sinai.

Earlier this week, Egypt's Interior Ministry announced that terrorists shot dead an Egyptian general in Sinai. In another similar shooting a few days earlier, a terror group killed General Khaled Kamel Osman.

The decision to pump water into the smuggling tunnels is seen as a severe blow not only to the terror groups in Sinai, but also to Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian factions inside the Gaza Strip.

Judging from the reaction of the Palestinian groups, it is clear that they are in a state of hysteria as they see their tunnels collapsing one after the other.

In a statement published in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian groups, including Hamas, denounced the flooding of the tunnels as a "disturbing nightmare" for the Palestinians. The factions appealed to the Egyptian authorities to "stop this despicable crime against the Palestinian people and their environment."

"The Palestinian people are surprised by the Egyptian move, which will tighten the blockade

on the Gaza Strip, destroy vast areas of agricultural land and harm those living near the border (with Egypt)," the statement said.

Initially, Hamas leaders did not take the reports about flooding the tunnels seriously. Some Hamas leaders, in fact, first thought that these were rumors designed to scare them and other Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip.

But when Hamas leaders woke up on September 13 to discover that the Egyptians had begun pumping water into the smuggling tunnels, they could not believe what they were seeing.

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri announced that his movement asked the Egyptians to stop flooding the tunnels with seawater. "We hope that the Egyptians will comply with our demand," Abu Zuhri said. "This measure is completely unacceptable and poses a threat to many families living alongside the border."

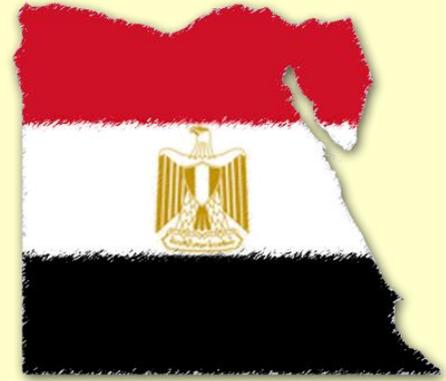
Sources in the Gaza Strip noted this week that the Egyptian move has thus far proven to be effective and successful. They said that since being flooded with water, several tunnels have collapsed.

It is worth noting that despite its outrage, Hamas has stopped short of issuing threats against Egypt in response to the flooding of the tunnels.

Hamas's response would have been different had it been Israel that was flooding the tunnels with water. But Hamas knows very well that it would not be a good idea to mess with the Egyptian authorities and President Sisi.

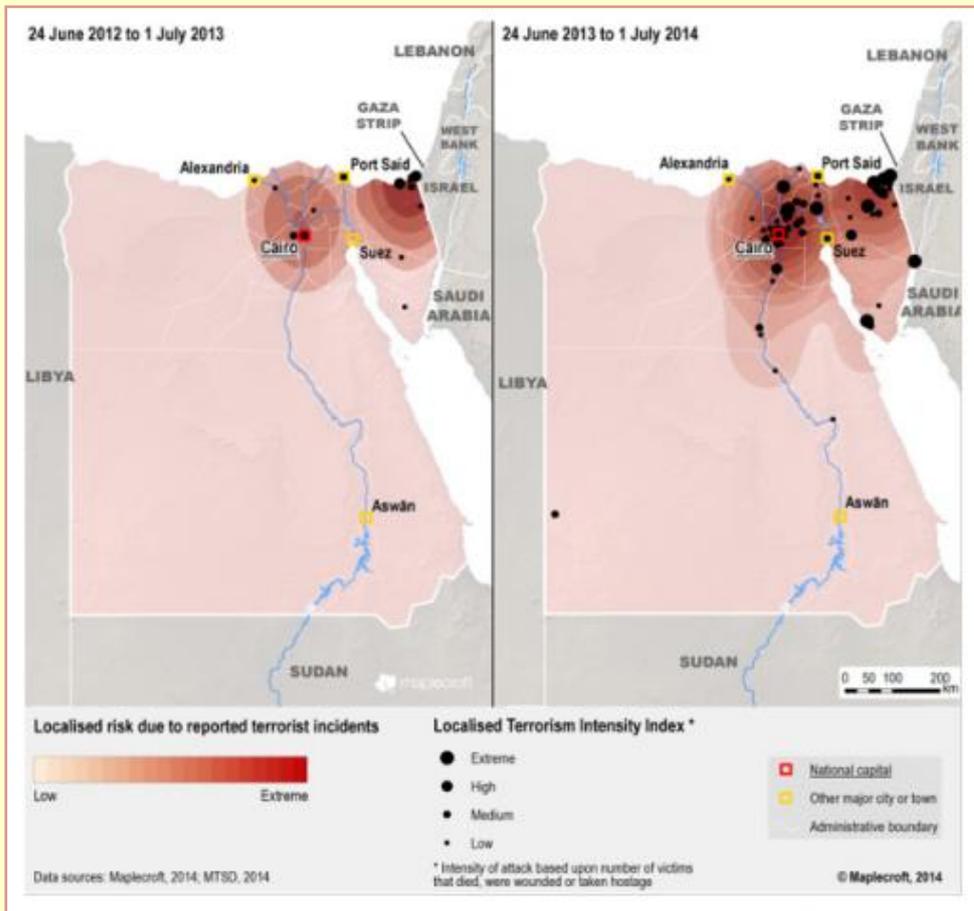
During the past two years, the Egyptians have destroyed hundreds of smuggling tunnels along their border with the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, Hamas did not dare launch one terror attack against Egypt.

Hamas is now pretending that it is concerned about the damage to the environment that is caused by



the flooding of the smuggling tunnels. But the truth is that the environment of the Gaza Strip is the last thing that Hamas cares about. Hamas did not think about damage to the environment or to agricultural fields when its men fired thousands of rockets at Israel in the

stands to benefit from Sisi's war against Hamas. The destruction of the tunnels means fewer weapons used by Hamas to attack Israel. However, Israel still has good reason to be worried about Hamas's plans and intentions. While Sisi is busy flooding the tunnels on the border with Egypt, Hamas continues to dig new ones on the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel.



It is no secret that Hamas has also managed to rebuild many of the terror tunnels that were used to infiltrate gunmen into Israel during last year's military confrontation between the two sides. Hamas is planning to use these tunnels in the future, to dispatch its men to kill as many Israelis as possible. The Israelis have thus far been monitoring the situation very closely and have refrained from attacking the tunnels. That is because Israel is keen on maintaining the unofficial truce with Hamas that was reached in the aftermath of last year's war, known as Operation Protective Edge.

past few years. In fact, Hamas used these fields, as well as populated areas, as launching pads for attacking Israel.

Hamas is interested only in one thing: preserving its rule in the Gaza Strip. The tunnels that are now being destroyed by the Egyptians were used by Hamas to smuggle all types of weapons into the Gaza Strip. Hamas warlords are also believed to have earned millions of dollars from the smuggling industry during the past few years.

Sisi's war against the smuggling tunnels will undoubtedly weaken Hamas and other radical groups in the Gaza Strip. The Egyptian president should be commended, rather than criticized, for his courageous actions against Islamist terrorists, both in the Gaza Strip and in Sinai.

Sisi's actions will benefit not only Egyptians, but also many Palestinians who are opposed to Hamas and radical Islamist groups. Israel also

Israel can do at this stage other than hope that Sisi will continue with his measures to undermine Hamas. Any attempt by Israel to flood a Hamas tunnel will most likely spark an international outcry and bring condemnations from the United Nations. In addition, such a move on the part of Israel is likely to trigger a violent response from Hamas -- one that could lead to another war.

When the Egyptians destroy a Hamas tunnel, that is called "war on terrorism." But when Israel destroys a tunnel, that is condemned as an "act of aggression." This moral slithering is why it is important for the international community to stand behind Sisi's relentless war on radical Islam. Without such backing, the Islamists will continue to pose a major threat not only to Israel, but to many Arabs and Muslims who oppose Hamas, Islamic State and Islamic Jihad.



Khaled Abu Toameh, an Arab Muslim, is a veteran award-winning journalist who has been covering Palestinian affairs for nearly three decades. He studied at Hebrew University and began his career as a reporter by working for a PLO-affiliated newspaper in Jerusalem. Abu Toameh currently works for the international media, serving as the 'eyes and ears' of foreign journalists in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Abu Toameh's articles have appeared in numerous newspapers around the world, including The Wall Street Journal, US News & World Report and The Sunday Times of London. Since 2002 he has been writing on Palestinian affairs for The Jerusalem Post. Abu Toameh has also been working as a producer and consultant for NBC News since 1989. He is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute.

Japan Needs to Wake Up on Terrorism

By Scott N. Romaniuk

Source: <http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/japan-needs-to-wake-up-on-terrorism/>

Sept 27 – Japan appears to be coming out of a long coma of non-violent political action in spite of being caught between domestic political violence and terrorism, and its relationships with Western states battling a seemingly never-ending war against terrorism. The idea that Japan is an island no longer serves as a metaphorical instrument in the geopolitical world of today. Al Qaeda's global reach woke the world up well over a decade ago, and that world is being jolted again by the activities of the Islamic State (ISIS), which demonstrates an ideological pitch far exceeding that of other terrorist organizations operating today. Reaching further back into history, even before the Gulf War, Japan opposed dipping more than its toes into the realm of international conflict management, anti-terrorism efforts, and peacekeeping missions. As early as 1954, a non-binding upper house resolution proscribed Japanese missions overseas, regardless of a mission's purpose. Less than half of the Japanese population was in favor of Japanese involvement United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions in 1986. By the end of the 1980s, less than a quarter of Japan's population said they would support the dispatch of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF). Tokyo's position over the use of the SDF has become a tad relaxed, but even minor changes have brought major concerns, most notably from former-SDF members about the security of personnel currently overseas.

Can Japan afford to get caught-up in America's wars abroad?

Indeed, Japan was one of the latecomers in the US-led War on Terror, but it can no longer afford to overlook the growth and

concentrations of ISIS influence in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. "When we have a meeting with a president or prime minister from another country," said Indonesian President Joko Widodo, "always they say that now the number one issue is ISIS ... Indonesia [is] the same." Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert Del Rosario, speaking to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), affirmed that the ISIS threat to the Philippines is real. "At least 100 of our young Filipino Muslims have already infiltrated Iraq to undergo training to return and be jihadists or militants," stated former president, defense secretary, and armed forces chief Fidel Ramos.

Even China must heed the threat of ISIS from Afghanistan, where major operations can be funded by drugs production and trafficking. China's Foreign Ministry underscored its position in the face of ISIS, nothing that, "China opposes all forms of terrorism. China is willing to strengthen cooperation with the international community to fight together against terrorist forces, including the 'East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM),' in order to protect regional and global security and stability."

Japan's lethargic response to international terrorism has been somewhat puzzling because of its geographical proximity to the key actors in what the US described as the "Axis of Evil." No other key ally, not even Israel, is close to as many of the main state-sponsors of international terrorism as Japan. But like Israel, Japan is no stranger to political violence and terrorist activities. Terrorist attacks were a large part of the Showa Restoration – the Blood Oath Corps (*Ketsumeidan*) involved assassinations. After World War II



Japan fought the Japanese Red Army (JRA) (*Nihon Sekigun*) and other indigenous terrorist groups and organizations like the *Chukaku-ha*. Supreme Truth (*Aum Shinrikyo*) is a notable case. Japan has also had its close and intimate encounter with homegrown terrorism that acquired deadly materials abroad. The use of chemical agents in the Tokyo subway system came as a shock to Japan, in what some have described as chemical warfare on Japanese soil, but surprisingly few measures were implemented to circumvent future attacks.

Japan's somewhat inconsistent experience with terrorism is still considerable, especially compared to those of some Western states like the U.S., which only began to focus a lot of energy on the issue of international terrorism during the latter half of the 1990s – although the US has definitely not been distant from political violence. The U.S. even managed to dodge a lot of the terrorist activity that Western European states had become used to throughout the 1970s and 1980s as well as Israel's violent experiences during the 1990s. The European Union's (EU) response to terrorism has been closely aligned with actual terrorist attacks from 9/11 to Charlie Hebdo, and ISIS' wave of terrorism. There has been priority focus on the issue of "foreign fighters," pressure placed on travel and movement, propaganda, and the revival of Passenger Name Records (PNR). Attention was placed national competence because the EU recognized that this is where supranational polity has less powers to act. In Japan, reaction to terrorism has been conspicuously absent. Anti-terror initiatives in Europe have been fed by real and violent events for years but in Japan only the events of ISIS have provoked a reaction, if one could even call it that.

Although Japan has been one of the closest allies of U.S. in the post-War period, and even during America's recent charge against international terrorism, the Japanese model of domestic security and poor response after 9/11 was a product of the US' occupation of the Japanese home islands. Japan's poor security defense systems, what eventually factored in to Japan becoming one of the "weak links" in the coalition against international terrorism, were established by the security framework which came about by looking to either the Soviet Union or the United States. Yet Japan is not a lame duck. It has received billions of dollars from Washington over the past seven decades

in economic and security assistance. Japan will be expected now to move beyond its past responses to terrorism, which have previously involved reliance on domestic policing, appeasing terrorists, and putting limited domestic laws into practice.

What makes the Japanese security paradigm so unique?

Positive and negative points characterize the Japanese security paradigm. Tokyo's criminal justice system and domestic policing policies interact harmoniously, and its prison and rehabilitation systems deliver results. Japan, as in the case with JRA, cannot simply pass its terrorist threats onto other states and move on by providing indirect and passive support. Japan assumed that the decline of some terrorist organizations presupposed a decrease in the threat that terrorism more generally posed to Japanese society.

9/11 figures as a step forward in Japan's counterterrorism progression but not as significant as in other states. New laws, and the Self Defense Forces (SDF), while meaning that Japan could be present in the War on Terror, did not enable it to play a major and active, even proactive, role. Japan remained and remains reactive in terms of terrorism. Japan has moved beyond providing medical supplies/services, transportation, information gathering, and recognizing the need to protect US military facilities, in addition to the extension of sporadic humanitarian, economic, and other emergency assistance operations. The enactment of new security legislation is a continuation of Japan's previous policy moves to make it able to play a part in combating international terrorism but this merely provides a framework. Receiving praise from the US Department of State (DoS) for bringing security legislation in line with Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation, Tokyo is acting divisively by contradicting its own constitution.

Fighting terror, now, requires Japan to avoid its past mistakes and to step lightly given the position of its domestic constituents and international partners. It needs to move beyond establishing a veneer of cooperation and activity in the face of growing terrorist threats and address the core of its anti-terrorism capabilities. Its war-renouncing constitution will always be a hindrance. Its poor and self-contained intelligence



apparatus and institutions require further reform if they are to truly support any future anti-terrorism task forces. Since early in 2015, Japan has made little progress in fixing the main components of its counterterrorism efforts. Japan does not lack the essential elements to make a strong and proactive contribution to peace by combating terrorism. This is precisely what Tokyo's response to the ISIS hostage crisis, concerning two Japanese civilians, cultivated. Japan's financial and human resources, and political commitment are certainly in line with those of the United States and the most contributory actors in an ongoing WoT.

A number of remarkable intelligence gathering models, like the UK's MI6, the US' Central

Intelligence Agency (CIA), Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and Germany's Federal Intelligence Service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst* [BND]), exist for Japan to pattern itself after and provide indirect security to tangible and intangible infrastructure. Japan's baby steps in enhancing its law enforcement and domestic policing initiatives, however, do not speak to the level of commitment required for the country to make that necessary contribution. Rather, they contradict the very simple and clear message made by General Kiyofumi Iwata of Japan's SDF, delivered nearly a year ago that: "[t]errorism is never tolerated."

Scott Nicholas Romaniuk is a PhD Candidate in International Studies (University of Trento). His research focuses on asymmetric warfare, counterterrorism, international security, and the use of force.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Reasonable arguments posed in this article but Japan must carefully estimate if such an involvement would be beneficiary for the country. Its overall position so far provided a stable environment for progress and prosperity. Countries involved in counter-terrorism wars or campaigns suffer certain consequences and Japan's proximity to the "axis of evil" could create more problems than solutions expected. It would be interesting to observe how things will progress in this country and if Japan will resist the temptation to be involved in military operations that so far produced only body bags and not long term results. Once we had only al Qaeda to confront with. Now there is IS and who knows what else will emerge in the near future. Terrorism is only the tip of the iceberg and its roots – although well known – are well hidden and so far highly resistable to occasional pesticides of Western origin.

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Bangladesh on the Brink: Between Terrorism and Democracy

By Alexandra Stark

Source: <http://thediplomat.com/2015/09/bangladesh-on-the-brink-between-terrorism-and-democracy/>

Sept 28 – **There's a rising tide of political violence in Bangladesh — one that has gone mostly unnoticed by scholars and analysts.** Yet the country presents both a potential threat, as violence by fundamentalist Islamist groups' rises, and a prospective model for a democratic, majority-Islamic state. As a battleground over the role of Islam and politics, Bangladesh will be a crucial proving ground for those who see Islam as an inspiration for development, democracy, and peaceful social relations—and those with a fundamentalist vision for society who want to export terrorism to neighboring India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. As a potential bellwether for South Asia more broadly, Bangladesh deserves a second look.

The third largest Muslim country in the world, Bangladesh has a national identity stemming from a heritage of moderate **Sunni Islam** and a historical tradition of tolerance and pluralism. With a per capita income of just \$1,080, **Bangladesh is ranked among the poorest countries in the world**, yet it has sustained a democratic tradition since independence (although interspersed with several military coups). Bangladesh's blend of moderate Islam with a secular-oriented, democratic state could serve as a model for the region.

Yet Bangladesh is also threatened by a rising tide of radical Islamist violence that has its roots in both the struggle for



independence and a more recent wave of radicalized violence. For a relatively small diplomatic investment, the international community could help to deny radical Islamist groups a safe haven in South Asia and preserve a moderate Islamic democracy, by encouraging a negotiated settlement between the main political parties, working with the government of Bangladesh to root out terrorist organizations before they are able to metastasize, and providing protection for progressive media voices that are increasingly being targeted by terrorists.



The political violence has a complicated history: since **Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971**, two political parties have dominated the political arena—the secular-leaning Awami League and their arch-rivals, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), a center-right party allied with Jamaat-e-Islami, the largest Islamist party. The two have alternated as the parliamentary majority since independence, interspersed with military-led coups as the competition between the two has generated increased levels of corruption and violence. A recent editorial noted “Too often...Bangladesh has seen political instability due to the game of one-upmanship between the two leading political parties, with election and Parliament boycotts and incessant agitations becoming all too common.”

After winning elections in 2009, the Awami-led government set up the controversial International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) to try the leaders of pro-Pakistan paramilitaries that committed atrocities during the 1971 war with Pakistan. Not coincidentally, many of those militants subsequently became leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami. The sentencing of these leaders has brought a firestorm of contention and polarized the political scene even further.

When the ICT sentenced Abdul Quader Mollah to life imprisonment in February 2013 on charges of rape and mass murder, thousands of protesters, lead by secular-humanist oriented bloggers known as “**atheist bloggers**,” participated in massive daily demonstrations in Dhaka to express anger over what they viewed as the leniency of the Tribunal sentencing. This protest movement became known as the Shahbag protests.

A group known as **Hefazat-e-Islami**, an alliance of teachers and students associated with radical madrasas and with Jamaat-e-Islami, launched a counter-protest, vandalizing vehicles and clashing with police in cities throughout the country. The demonstrators called on the government to implement Hefazat's 13-point agenda, including outlawing blasphemy and implementing restrictions on women's rights.

These tensions came to a head in the 2014 elections, which Human Rights Watch called “the most violent in the country's history.” The Awami government refused to turn power over to a politically neutral caretaker government ahead of the elections, a tradition in Bangladeshi politics meant to minimize electoral corruption. In response, the BNP and Jamaat announced that they would boycott the election and launched a *hartal* or violent strike, where protestors blocked traffic, threw petrol bombs at buses and cars, and clashed with police. Protestors also targeted minority Hindu and Christian communities, traditionally seen as constituents of the Awami League. These tensions ratcheted up in 2015, with the BNP launching *hartals* in January to mark the anniversary of the 2014 elections.

These decades-old tensions are exacerbated by a rising tide of violent Islamic extremism, inspired—if not directly funded—by regional terrorist organizations. **In August 2005 more than 300 bombs exploded simultaneously across the country**, killing two and wounding more than 50. The group **Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh**, which has been linked to al-Qaeda, claimed responsibility. In February 2015 Avijit Roy, a highly regarded atheist blogger, was hacked to death on the streets of Dhaka. An Islamist group, Ansarullah Bangla Team, took credit for Roy's killing and three subsequent attacks against other well-known atheist bloggers, including one just last week.



The international community ignores the rapidly rising political violence in Bangladesh at its own risk. The violence represents a dispute not just over election results or trial outcomes, but over the very meaning of Bangladeshi nationalism. The moderate, secular-oriented elements of society and conservative Islamists are battling it out over conceptions of the role of religion in politics and society, but progressive voices are increasingly being drowned out by the spectacular violence of fundamentalist forces. These violent elements represent a small proportion of the population but tend to have an outsized influence on politics.

If the international community abandons Bangladesh to this rising tide of violence, the country could even serve as a staging ground for groups that are interested in targeting India or Afghanistan. Indeed, the recent arrests of several men accused of recruiting for ISIS, as well as the increasing militancy of groups like Hefazat that are supported by radical madrasas, has raised fears that local fundamentalist groups may link up to regional terrorist organizations—in fact, 12 suspected members of Al Qaeda were arrested in Dhaka in July.

But Bangladesh also had a chance to serve as an important model for a democratic Islamic state. **With a brand of Sunni Islam that is deeply influenced by the mystical practices of Sufi Islam and Hindu traditions, and a history of nationalism that recognizes secularism as one of its core tenets, Bangladesh could serve as a positive force and a powerful model across the Islamic world.** A positive outcome in Bangladesh does not require a military presence or even a major investment by the international community. Rather, by taking relatively inexpensive diplomatic measures, policymakers could help to turn the tide in Bangladesh.

✓ First, policymakers should put pressure on the leaders of the two political parties to reach a negotiated settlement to hold free and fair elections. Yes, the political arena is deeply polarized, but with a combination of political pressure and incentives in the form of development aid, the parties could reach some form of agreement. The BNP's recent decision to end its demands for the Awami League to immediately turn over power to a caretaker government indicates that there may be a fresh window for

negotiations to take place. The EU, U.S., and others can also assist by providing elections monitors and support for anti-corruption measures to assure both sides that the vote will be fair.

✓ The international community should also put pressure on Bangladesh's politicians to reign in human rights violations committed by state security forces. Human Rights Watch reports that the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), an elite security force, has engaged in extra-judicial killings, disappearances, and torture, against government opponents. Bringing the RAB to heel will build confidence in the government's anti-corruption efforts and help to tamp down the retaliatory cycle of political violence. The political dysfunction and state-sanctioned human rights violations have eroded support for the democratic process and eaten away at the legitimacy of the state. Peaceful elections and a reigned-in RAB will do much to reverse the cynical view that democracy is dead, which in turn drives political violence and radicalization.

✓ Policymakers should also assist the Bangladeshi government in its efforts to crack down on terrorist organizations. The recent attacks on bloggers have provoked outrage across the political spectrum and provided the government with an opportunity to increase their efforts against banned groups like Jamatul Mujahideen. But this crackdown has had the unfortunate side effect of making terrorist groups more difficult to track: many groups are keeping a lower-profile, operating through smaller splinter cells and engaging in individual, lone wolf-type attacks. The international community can build the government's capacity to deal with these more sophisticated attacks by providing intelligence and counter-terrorism training to the government, and encouraging them to continue to root out banned terrorist groups.

✓ The international community can also assist the government in providing security to moderate voices like the "atheist bloggers" whose voices have been silenced by attacks. The four bloggers murdered in the spring of 2015 were said to be on a "hitlist" of 84 atheist and



left-leaning bloggers circulated amongst Islamist groups, raising fears that others may be targeted. These fears could have a stifling effect on moderate pundits' ability to participate in the debate about the appropriate role of religion in politics and society, surrendering the field to more

radical voices. The government should actively work to provide security for the moderate voices that have been threatened, thus facilitating an ongoing conversation about the role of religion in politics and society.

Alexandra Stark is pursuing a PhD in International Relations at Georgetown University, and is a Research Assistant for the World Faiths Development Dialogue in Washington, D.C. She holds an MSc from the London School of Economics. Her work has been published in CBS News, The Guardian, Tom Rick's Foreign Policy blog, and other venues.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: A very interesting article on a country that we really do not know many things about. My only concern is that if international community will be involved things might change to the wrong direction mainly because solutions provided will not take into account local parameters, history and heritage. This is the main conclusion from similar interventions worldwide. Solutions intending to Westernize Muslim countries never worked in the past (i.e. Afghanistan; Iraq) and will not work in the future because solution providers never spend time to understand and feel locals and their needs.

Why is Europe desperate to spy on its Muslims?

Source: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/james-renton/why-is-europe-desperate-to-spy-on-its-muslims>

Sept 23 – The Muslim, in the eyes of the west, is stuck in a perpetual condition of imminent fanaticism. This is why the west has to survey all Muslims, all of the time.

Europe from Syria, were published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 2 September. One would be forgiven for thinking that they are the extreme sentiments of a fringe figure in European politics. Indeed, prior to a meeting with Orbán the following day, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, gave us a salutary lesson in what European Christians ought to think about the migration crisis: 'For a Christian it shouldn't matter what race, religion and nationality the person in need represents.' No right-thinking European policy-maker to the west of Hungary would disagree with Tusk—in public; the image of the EU as an anti-racist zone at the forefront of liberalism and democracy is *sacrosanct*.



NYC protest against anti-Muslim bias after North Carolina shootings. Demotix/M. Stan Reaves.

“Is it not worrying in itself that European Christianity is now barely able to keep Europe Christian? There is no alternative, and we have no option but to defend our borders.”

These words, written by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán about Muslims fleeing to

liberalism and democracy is *sacrosanct*. The reality, however, is that in 2015 most European states see their Muslim populations as a potential threat to human security. For this reason, the UK, France and other governments are working to extend the already global architecture of Muslim surveillance. Most of the governments of Europe and the wider west are, like Orbán, frightened of Muslims. This



Islamophobia has led to the biggest, globe-spanning surveillance apparatus in human history. Beyond the observation that the west has a phobia, few scholars or analysts have attempted an answer the question - why? - why does this mean that Europe must spy on them? We must start to engage with this urgent issue; it lies at the heart of, among other crises, Europe's current immigration panic—since 2011 most states have wanted to keep Muslim refugees out, and, now the dam has burst, what will be done about it?

The surveillance regime

The Edward Snowden revelations of 2013 unveiled the global extent of hidden internet and telephony surveillance of entire populations conducted by US and British intelligence services in cooperation with European states such as Germany. Since then, the UK Government has taken steps to legalise blanket surveillance, and, along with several other European governments, to extend the Muslim surveillance order in profound ways.

In July 2014, the British Government introduced 'emergency' legislation— since judged to be unlawful— that permits blanket communications data (though not content) retention without independent oversight, and requires the cooperation of overseas companies. The new Investigatory Powers Bill will, we were told in the last Queen's Speech, go even further by 'addressing the gap' in the ability to obtain online intelligence and evidence regarding 'subjects of interest, suspects and vulnerable people'. In addition, new citizen surveillance agents are being enlisted: the UK's planned 'Extremism Bill' will 'enable' employers to check whether an employee is an 'extremist' and 'bar them from working with children'; and the 'Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015' requires by law that those who run universities, local authorities, NHS Trusts and even nursery schools 'must ... have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

In France, the Constitutional Council approved on 23 July a wide-ranging intelligence law that allows surveillance in private spaces and the monitoring of internet and mobile communications without legal oversight. The new law also mandates the sharing of data by communication companies and their installation

of 'black boxes' to detect suspect online behaviour.

Whilst the UK and France possess the most extensive surveillance systems in Europe, they are not alone. The Belgian government recently authorised the bugging of telecommunications for a wider range of 'offences', which now include 'activities of public provocation to commit terrorist offences'. And after the Thalys attack in August, the Belgian Prime Minister, Charles Michel, said, 'Increasingly, we're going to be in a society, where we have to be ready to sacrifice certain freedoms in the interest of fighting terrorism.' Earlier in the year in April, the Italian Government introduced a decree that, among other measures, criminalised the online endorsement of terrorism. In the face of public opposition, the Government had to abandon its attempt to include in the same decree the legalisation of remote data capture. And in Denmark, the government proposed in February that the Danish Defence Intelligence Services should be able to spy on the communications of Danish citizens abroad without the permission of the courts.

The details of Muslim surveillance programmes in individual European states only gives us a part of the picture, however. Despite their differences in approach, each state's efforts belongs to a Europe-wide (and indeed western) consensus on the problem: the urgent and unremitting need to find and track dangerous Muslims.

Not only are national European intelligence services known to cooperate on the question of mass surveillance, but the European Union has a region-wide strategy for 'internal security' in which surveillance plays a key role. The EU itself does not spy on Muslims. But it is working hard to enable the gathering and sharing of intelligence by Member States with the development of ever more sophisticated tools and frameworks: technological, organisational, legal, and financial.

Much of this project—monitored by the EU Council's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Gilles de Kerchove— is set out in the ['European Agenda for Security'](#), which was presented on 28 April 2015. Measures include the Passenger Name Records Directive for the collection of data on flight passengers, so that they can be assessed before arrival and departure; the EU Internet



Referral Unit to coordinate and share the flagging of 'terrorist and violent extremist online content', in close cooperation with industry; increased intelligence and information exchange and judicial cooperation; and an EU level forum with IT companies.

Since the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled in April 2014 that the EU's 2006 Data Retention Directive was invalid, the Commission has left Member States to develop their own statutory instruments. But it is certainly not getting in their way. In addition, the digital environment is only one aspect of the surveillance machine. Just as significant is the development of a transnational support-system for networks that are designed to spot 'radicalisation' in local communities. The EU's Radicalisation Awareness Network is said to connect over 1,000 'practitioners', which can include teachers, social workers, local authorities, and health workers. And, significantly, the EU is extending its 'radicalisation prevention' project to the Middle East, North and sub-Saharan Africa, and the Western Balkans. Indeed, partnerships with so-called 'third countries' are a central plank of the EU's security strategy for the next five years.

The principal target of this surveillance order is rarely articulated—the word 'Muslim' is difficult to find in official European Union counter-terrorism strategy documents. But the west's 'radicalisation prevention' project requires—demands—spying on Muslims. Non-Muslims might get caught up in the net, but European states do not expect them to become 'radicalised'. In EU and Member State parlance, 'radicalisation' is short-hand for a political process that only involves Muslims. This is the reason why the EU and its Member States require a transnational network to get into the nooks and crannies of all communities in which Muslims can be found. The surveillance order is, therefore, chiefly a Muslim surveillance order—even if Europe dare not utter those words.

Surveillance and the war machine

The surveillance of Muslims is not a stand-alone project merely confined to the act of looking. The spying system is but one part of an inter-related security or war machine that western states have developed to fight the Muslim enemy. The other features of this machine—incarceration, killing, management of population movements, and propaganda—

follow, always, from the findings of the intelligence system. The process of seeing, therefore, must not be understood as merely a question of State snooping or unpleasant voyeurism. It is, rather, a component of a war system. Any civilian response to the surveillance order must conceive it in these terms, otherwise its purpose and significance is lost. Once these connections are understood, we can start to appreciate the enormity of the consequences of its globality and power.

The official explanation

As an explanation of our current politics, the burgeoning western security policy elite point to the very real threat of terrorist organisations or movements. From 2001, Muslims have murdered and harmed members of the public in New York City, Madrid, Paris, London, Moscow, Mumbai, Baghdad, the beaches of Libya—the list goes on. And, this elite emphasises, the hidden internal threat in the west has been magnified exponentially by the phenomenon of western Muslims enlisting with Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. When these fighters return to the west, it is argued, they will be radical, military-trained agents ready to wreak havoc.

But is the threat posed by some Muslims enough to explain today's surveillance order? Every state involved in the extension of world surveillance has faced numerous internal and international threats in the past. Revolutionary socialism and the Cold War, fascism, imperial struggles for power, colonial rebellion: in the last one hundred and fifty years western states have arguably faced several existential threats. And in response, each state created and extended its own espionage machine. But the reach of today's world surveillance blanket far exceeds what preceded it. And it keeps growing; indeed, the very nature of the anti-Muslim surveillance order requires its exponential expansion.

To understand the extent of today's global surveillance order, and why it will not stop spreading its tentacles into human life, we must look away from rational motives—of an assessment of objective causes and effects. Muslims cannot be said to pose a greater threat to liberal-democracies than communism or fascism, military invasion by foreign states, or inter-state nuclear war. There is no rational explanation as to why



the west requires a bigger, more intrusive apparatus for detecting threats from Muslim civilians than it did for identifying plots by pro-Soviet Communists. We could turn to the transformative effects of technology as a partial explanation. Developments in digital identification and the internet clearly provide greater opportunities for watching populations than was the case in the past. But some of the most significant changes to the western political order have nothing to do with technology, such as the proposed use in France of surveillance in private spaces.

Europe's idea of the Muslim

It is to Europe and the wider west's *idea* of the Muslim—not the reality—that we must turn if we are to understand the surveillance order. Research on the intellectual roots of the Islamophobia-surveillance connection has barely started. Nonetheless, the core questions that we need to answer are clear: when and why did western policy elites start to see all Muslims as being a potential danger to society? What are the triggers that initiate the move from prejudice to state policy? What are the precedents for the current moment, and what can they tell us?

To start moving towards answers to these questions, Edge Hill University is hosting an international symposium this month. It will explore a range of key points in the west's political history: from colonial Bombay and the US Empire in the Pacific to the EU's policies towards its borderlands. In addition, the symposium will pay close attention to Christian

theology and its place in the west's supposedly secular politics.

At the base of the surveillance order is the idea of the Muslim as a potential fanatic. Certainly, western policy-makers consider that non-Muslims can become fanatics of some description, but their path to fanaticism is assumed to be an anomaly. Not so the Muslim. This western association between the Muslim (and, it is critical to note, the Jew) and fanaticism derives from a long European *Christian* tradition.

The nineteenth century French scholar of the Orient, Ernest Renan, articulated a scientific, academic version of this tradition in his hugely influential histories of Christianity. Abrahamic monotheism was founded, he argued, thanks to the single-minded fanaticism of what he called the Semites of the desert—the Arab peoples that, he argued, included the Israelites. Why the west of more recent times came to see the Jew and the Muslim as being separate, has its own story. But that separation does not alter the umbilical connection between the west's Christian view of itself and its understanding of the Muslim: Christianity—Europe—became liberal, universal, and sophisticated; but the Muslim could not leave behind his or her fanatical roots. The Muslim, in the eyes of the west, is stuck in a perpetual condition of imminent fanaticism. This is why the west has to survey all Muslims, all of the time. And that is why the public disavowals by west European politicians of the views of figures like Viktor Orbán are disingenuous. They all fear the Muslim.

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Iran not invited to a UN summit on ISIS because U.S. designates it as a state sponsor of terrorism

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150929-iran-not-invited-to-a-un-summit-on-isis-because-u-s-designates-it-as-a-state-sponsor-of-terrorism>

Sept 29 – **The United States did not invite Iran to Tuesday's UN summit on combating Islamic State and other violent extremist groups because the Department of State still designates Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism.**

It is not likely that Iranian president Hassan Rouhani would have participated in the summit even if Iran were invited.

Observers note that the fact that Iran has not been invited to a meeting to discuss a coordinated strategy to defeat ISIS, a Sunni

militant group Iran regards as an enemy, is yet one more illustration of the institutional and political obstacles to U.S. cooperation with Iran beyond the nuclear deal the two sides agreed to in July.

The *Guardian* reports that U.S. State Department officials confirmed that Iran's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism was the reason for its exclusion from the countering ISIS summit being chaired by



President Barack Obama on Tuesday. Iran was designated a state sponsor of terrorism by the State Department in 1984. The latest State Department report said: "Iran continued its terrorist-related activity in 2014, including support for Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza, Lebanese Hezbollah, and various groups in Iraq and throughout the Middle East."

The United States has also accused Iran of increasing assistance to Iraqi Shia militias, one of which was designated a terrorist organization, "in response to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant [ISIL] incursion into Iraq, and has continued to support other militia groups in the region."

The state sponsor of terrorism label does not preclude negotiating with a national government, as was the case on the nuclear deal. Rather, it is a tool often used to block business activities of organizations and high-level individuals in the state designated as a terrorism sponsor, impose travel bans, or freeze assets.

"These labels and lists reduce American maneuverability and flexibility at a time when agility is a critical property in foreign policy," Trita Parsi, the head of the National Iranian-American Council, an advocacy group promoting diplomacy with Iran, told the *Guardian*. "For Iran, some of these things become a litmus test for American sincerity. It may or may not have been interested in taking part but it is enormously insulted not to be invited."

Ilan Goldenberg, a former senior State Department official who is now Middle East director at the Center for a New American Security, said that the invocation of the state sponsor status was largely a matter of discretion and covered a host of underlying political problems.

"Politically, it is too soon for both sides," Goldenberg told the *Guardian*. "We still have the Arabs to manage. If we invite in the Iranians we anger the Saudis and the other Gulf states. And for political reasons, too, since the nuclear deal, the administration has tacked to the right." He added that in Iran, the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, had declared himself opposed to greater engagement with Iran beyond the nuclear deal.

On Sunday, speaking to Iran policy analysts in New York, Rouhani indicated his views on combating ISIS were closer to Russians than to the West, insisting that priority be given to fighting the extremist group first without weakening the Assad regime in Damascus. Only after that, he said, should reform in Damascus be addressed.

Leading Sunni states such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the Gulf states, say that it would not be possible to gain popular support for fighting ISIS, an extremist Sunni Islamist group, if such a fight is perceived as helping Shi'a Iran in supporting its regional agents – the Shi'a government in Iraq, the Alawite Assad regime in Syria, and the Lebanese Shi'a Hezbollah – in continuing to oppress and disenfranchise Sunnis in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

TSA agents find record number of guns in carry-on luggage at airports

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150930-tsa-agents-find-record-number-of-guns-in-carryon-luggage-at-airports>

Sept 30 – The Transportation Security Agency (TSA) said its airport security check-point agents have found a record number of guns in passengers' carry-on luggage during one week in September.

The agents in airports across the United States discovered 67 guns in carry-on luggage during the week which ended 17 September, according to the agency. The agency also said that the number for the week broke an earlier record of 65 firearms found during one week in

May 2013. TSA notes that of those 67 guns, 56 were loaded and 26 had a round chambered.

The TSA added that in the second full week of September, its agents found other weapons in passengers' luggage, including throwing stars, stun guns, gunpowder, and belt buckle knives.

"Unfortunately these sorts of occurrences are all too frequent which is why we talk about these finds ... This is a friendly reminder to please leave these items at home," the TSA says in its weekly disclosure of



weapon discoveries. The TSA adds that most passengers who pack heat in their carry-ons have “no ill intent.”

“In many cases, people simply forgot they had these items,” according to the TSA.

The TSA notes that guns and gun parts are prohibited in carry-on luggage, but passengers can check these items if they declare them with the airline. Passengers who do not follow the guidelines can face fines up to \$11,000.

TSA shared data with NBC News which show that the agency’s officers found nearly 1,900 firearms in carry-on luggage between 1 January and 31 August 2015. **This year is thus on track to see a 28 percent spike in the number of firearms found compared to the 2,212 guns — an average of about 40 a week — discovered by TSA agents in 2014.**

Twenty-two percent more guns were found in 2014 as compared with 2013, according to the data.

NBC News notes that it is unclear whether more people are traveling with guns or whether TSA agents are being more vigilant. A TSA spokesman declined to comment on the matter.

The Department of Homeland Security in June announced that an undercover test found 67 out of 70 weapons got past TSA agents. The 95 percent failure rate led to the reassignment of the acting head of the TSA. The new TSA administrator, Peter Neffenger, said at a subsequent Homeland Security hearing that his goal was to “train out those failures” by the end of September.

Syria: Time to Reformulate the Rules of the Game

INSS Insight No. 750, September 30, 2015

By Udi Dekel

Source: <http://www.inss.org.il/index.aspx?id=4538&articleid=10695>

In practice, Syria is already split internally and divided into areas under the influence of external powers. As the Russians deploy, the coastal region will all but come directly under their control. Northern Syria, especially the Kurdish region, is under Turkish influence. The central axis of Syria – from Damascus to Homs and Aleppo – and the Syrian-Lebanese border are, with Hizbollah’s help, under Iranian influence. Eastern Syria is the battlefield for the war by the US-led international coalition against the Islamic State. Israel must thus undertake an in-depth analysis of the changing rules of the game, in face of Russia’s involvement and its determination to shape the future of Syria. This new situation changes the internal and external balance of power in Syria and increases the risk of events spilling over to Israel, such as the possibility that Salafist jihadi rebel forces will be drawn to southern Syria, the only Syrian sector currently free of active influence by external actors. The Israeli government must formulate its long term goals for the north, including willingness to fight for operational freedom of action, and the ability to establish an Israeli area of influence in southern Lebanon, the Golan Heights, and southern Syria.

Once again Syria commands a leading position on the international agenda, due to the flood of refugees moving through Europe – as Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey are no longer able to take in additional Syrian refugees – and due to President Vladimir Putin’s decision to substantially increase military aid to the Assad regime. This new Russian assistance includes the construction of a Russian airfield on the Syrian coast near Latakia in the Alawite district, Assad’s primary base of support. Moscow’s heightened involvement in Syria cut short the preliminary discussions between the various external players who were trying to formulate a political settlement in which Assad himself would step down, even as the regime would continue to maintain its existing character during a transition period. This was predicated on the assessment that the Syrian army and security mechanisms were critical in stabilizing the situation during an interim period, as well as on the need to neutralize the involvement of the Islamic State and other Salafist jihadi forces whose capabilities were outstripping those of the other factions fighting in Syria.

The Islamic State as the Key Threat: Broad Agreement Is Insufficient

The foreign actors in the Syrian arena – the United States, Russia, the EU, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the Gulf principalities, and

Jordan, as well as the various minority groups in Syria (the Kurds, Druze, Alawites, and others – share a primary interest, namely, dismantling the Islamic State and



preventing its takeover of Syria in the post-Assad era. This shared interest ostensibly serves as the basis for establishing a transitional government in Syria that would stabilize the situation and outline a path for the future. But it seems that promoting the interests shared by most of the actors as a way to formulate an interim agreement in Syria under regional and international sponsorship is beyond reach, which is why the respective actors are in no hurry to bring the phenomenon known as the Islamic State to an end.

The Western powers, led by the United States, are not willing to pay the price needed to dismantle the Islamic State's military capabilities and to replace the Assad regime, i.e., putting boots on the ground – the only effective way to change the situation. Somewhat surprisingly, the confrontation with the Islamic State has yielded some positive consequences, such as channels of coordination and dialogue with Iran and other players not allied with the United States. Furthermore, at this point the United States and its allies are not eager to attack the Islamic State with the required effectiveness because the collapse of the Islamic State could result in increased power for Assad.

Iran, which sees the Islamic State as an immediate threat to its own hegemony in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and beyond, is very concerned about the ramifications of a coalition fighting the Islamic State, especially the possibility of an extensive US military presence in the region – near the Iran-Iraq border, in the Kurdish enclave, and in eastern Turkey, as well as in Syria and Jordan. The Iranians view the strengthening of Assad's regime as a primary tool in stopping the Islamic State from spreading and preventing the radical Sunni elements – especially Salafist jihadists, such as Jabhat al-Nusra – from seizing control of Syria. Another key actor is Turkey, led by President Erdogan, which is using the Islamic State as a smokescreen to hide its destruction of bases of the PKK and the Kurdish underground in northern Iraq, northern Syria, and even within Turkey itself. Typical of his fickle opinions, Erdogan has removed the ouster of Assad from the top of the list of Turkey's demands. As for fighting the Islamic State, Erdogan has made it clear that Turkey will take resolute action only after NATO, led by the United States, gathers the necessary forces toward that objective.

For Saudi Arabia and the Gulf principalities, Iran remains the most threatening enemy. Their policy is therefore aimed at reducing Iran's influence in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Some of the Arab nations see a drawn out, pointless war against the Islamic State as the lesser of the evils compared to two worse possibilities for the future of Syria: Iranian dominance via its proxies, such as Hizbollah, or the seizure of power by factions belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood or Salafist jihadists, their main enemy within the Sunni camp itself. Therefore, the Islamic State offers them a way to deflect what they consider to be two graver alternatives – Iranian dominance or a radical Muslim government in Syria. The Middle East rationale mandates creating influence with the power to destroy rather than to contribute constructively. Therefore, in the short term and given to the need to choose sides right now, the so-called pragmatic Sunni states are assisting – or allowing provision of military and economic assistance – to Salafist jihadi organizations and the Muslim Brotherhood fighting against the Assad regime.

Looking Ahead

The Syrian tragedy reflects the fact that the Assad regime and the Islamic State are the flashpoints for two sets of conflicts in the Muslim Arab world: first, the inter-ethnic conflict between the Sunni camp, led by Saudi Arabia, and the Shiite camp, led by Iran, and second, the intra-Sunni rivalries, which are no less dramatic than the inter-ethnic fights, the latter involving the so-called pragmatic states, the Salafist jihadi actors, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Both the Assad regime and the Islamic State are tools in the hands of stronger actors; they enjoy immunity thanks to the lack of resolve among the various adversaries to topple them. The very existence of the Islamic State at its current level of power and the fear of a vacuum in Syria keep external involvement from destroying Assad's regime.

The key question in behind the scenes discussions among the involved parties is: will Assad be forced to give up the presidency, or will he be part of the settlement for a transition period, after which the Syrian people will have a chance to determine the nature of the permanent arrangement? The Saudi-led Sunni camp has



decided to join forces with Turkey and Qatar, the nations identified with the Muslim Brotherhood, and they refuse any option that includes Assad retaining his position even for an interim period. By contrast, Iran, which views Assad's survival as a firm precondition, is supported by Russia, and the two are coordinating their moves to this end. Russia has once again hardened its line and is significantly increasing its military deployment and aid to Assad's regime, even to the point of active military involvement. The Sunni camp, which considers the toppling of Assad as a central goal, has greatly strengthened the forces rebelling against the Assad regime in Syria's north and south. Support for the rebel forces will continue to the point where Assad is severely compromised and he represents a burden rather than an asset for Iran and Russia. At that point, it will be possible to neutralize their veto power over an interim arrangement without Assad at the helm. In response, the increasing Russian military intervention and the close coordination between Russia and Iran are intended to create a situation in which an Alawite-minority regime remains in place in the coastal strip from the north, through Hama and Homs, to Damascus and the area bordering Lebanon.

Consequences for Israel

In practice, Syria is already split internally and divided into areas under the influence of external powers. As the Russians deploy, the coastal region will all but come directly under their control. Northern Syria, especially the Kurdish region, is under Turkish influence. The central axis of Syria – from Damascus to Homs and Aleppo – and the Syrian-Lebanese border are, with Hizbollah's help, under Iranian influence. Eastern Syria is the battlefield for the war by the US-led international coalition against the Islamic State.

Udi Dekel, who joined INSS as a senior research fellow in 2012, was head of the negotiations team with the Palestinians in the Annapolis process under the Olmert government. In this framework, he coordinated the staff work and led twelve negotiating committees. In February 2013 he was appointed Managing Director of INSS. Brig. Gen. (res.) Dekel filled many senior IDF positions in intelligence, international military cooperation, and strategic planning. His last post in the IDF was head of the Strategic Planning Division in the Planning Directorate of the General Staff, and as a reservist he is head of the Center for Strategic Planning. Previously he served as head of the foreign relations section in the General Staff and head of the Research Division in Lahak, Israel Air Force Intelligence. Brig. Gen. (res.) Dekel served as head of the Israel-UN-Lebanon committee following the Second Lebanon War and head of military committees

The only area not claimed by an outside force as a critical interest is the southern Syrian expanse, including the Golan Heights. It is critical that Israel retain operational freedom of action in this sector and in Lebanon. Israel was therefore shocked once it became clear that Russia was sending forces and building military strongholds on the Syrian coast. This was the reason Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accompanied by IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eizenkot, rushed to Moscow: to formulate understandings on avoiding clashes between Russian and Israeli forces, especially aerial clashes, and preventing the arrival of advanced Russian weapons, such as surface-to-air missiles, that could impinge on the IDF's operational freedom of action in Lebanon and southern Syria. Moreover, Israel is concerned that advanced weapons that Russia supplies to Assad's forces will end up in Hizbollah hands, especially in Lebanon. Perhaps Israel was also testing the possibility of the Russian track being used in reaching understandings on rewriting the rules of the game with regard to the Iran-Assad-Hizbollah axis, based on the awareness of the shared threat inherent in the Islamic State.

Israel must thus undertake an in-depth analysis of the changing rules of the game, in face of the Russian involvement and Moscow's determination to shape the future of Syria. This new situation changes the internal and external balance of power in Syria and increases the risk of events spilling over to Israel, such as the possibility that Salafist jihadi rebel forces will be drawn to southern Syria, the only Syrian sector currently free of active influence by external actors. The Israeli government must formulate its long term goals for the north, including willingness to fight for operational freedom of action, and the ability to establish an Israeli area of influence in southern Lebanon, the Golan Heights, and southern Syria.



with Egypt and Jordan. In addition, he headed a working group on strategic-operative cooperation with the United States on development of a response to the surface-to-surface missile threat and international military cooperation. He served on the 2006 commission to update Israel's security concept and coordinated the formulation of IDF strategy. Brig. Gen. (res.) Dekel's areas of research include: decision making processes in Israel and the connection between policy and the military; the multidisciplinary integration in Israel of policy, diplomacy; the military; economics, society, and communications; the peace process with the Palestinians and with Syria; strategic trends in the Middle East and challenges for Israel; the influence of the new media on the Arab world and Iran; security concepts; strategic military concepts; and strategic planning processes.

Mass killer Anders Breivik threatens to go on hunger strike in protest at prison conditions

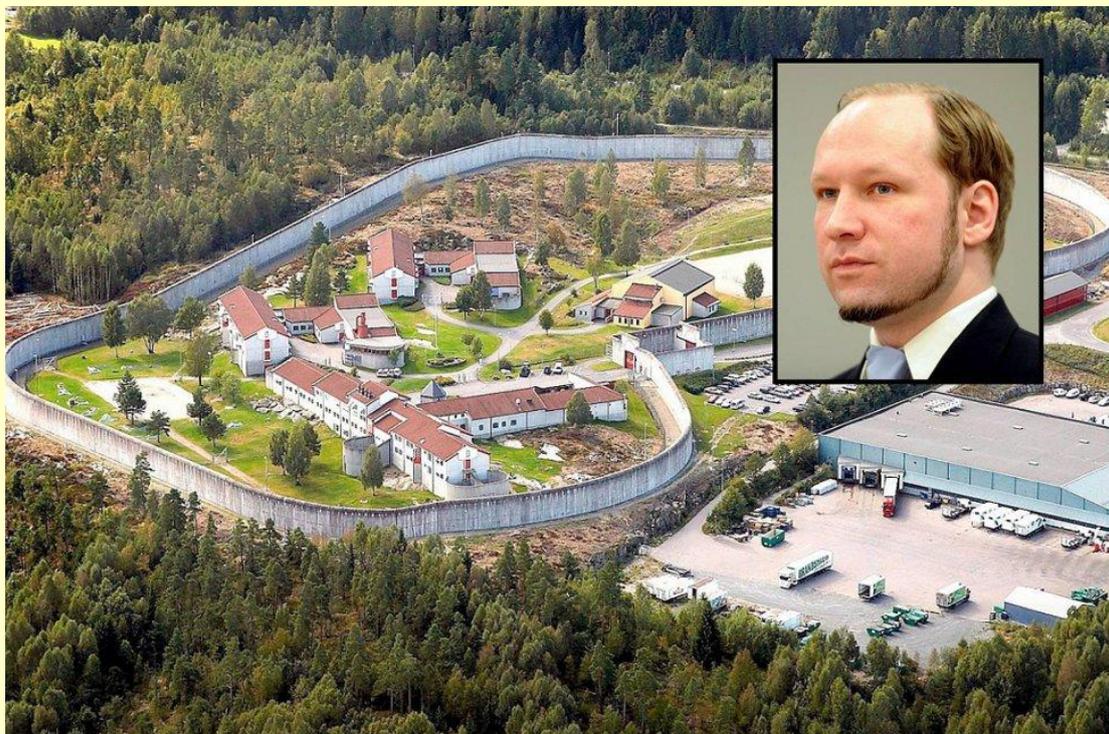
Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/norway/11901031/Mass-killer-Anders-Breivik-threatens-to-go-on-hunger-strike-in-protest-at-prison-conditions.html>

Sept 30 – **Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik has threatened to go on hunger strike until he dies of starvation in protest at what he claims has been a drastic worsening of his prison conditions.**

The far-Right extremist complained that since the second of September, he had been confined in isolation to a single cell, which he was only allowed to leave for one hour each day.

He also complained that he was being given less time with prison staff, and that what communication there was now often only took place only through a small gap in the door.

"I will eventually continue the hunger strike until death. I cannot stand any more," he wrote in an open letter sent to Norwegian and Swedish media.



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Breivik is currently confined at Skien prison, south of Oslo, after receiving Norway's maximum 21-year sentence for his brutal twin terror attack in 2011, which left 77 people dead.

Lisbeth Kristine Royneland, whose 18-year-old daughter Synne was killed when Breivik opened fire at a Labour Party youth camp on the island of Utoya, said that families of his victims felt "no sympathy at all".



“He has the hardest sentence that Norway can give and he has to be treated accordingly,” she said. “He has very strict treatment, because his sentence has said that he’s a danger to himself and other inmates.” Ms Royneland was this year appointed chair of the organisation representing those bereaved by the attacks.



In the letter, Breivik complained that his conditions meant he could no longer study the political science course he began earlier this year at the University of Oslo.

“The decision to allow a drastic deterioration of prison conditions has forced me to drop out of my studies, which in turn means that I will lose my place at the university,” he complained.

“The studies, which were made possible for only thirteen full days before the minister of justice put an end to them, were the only thing I had.”

Breivik’s lawyer Oystein Storrvik, who is suing the Norwegian state for human rights violations on behalf of his client, told Norway’s Dagbladet newspaper that Breivik’s prison conditions had indeed worsened.

“I can confirm that there is less of the little that was,” he said. “Total isolation from other people has been maintained, while his movements are confined to a smaller space. He also has less time with officers.”



EDITOR'S COMMENT: Hunger strike? Really?

The growing link between intelligence communities and academia

By Scott Firsing

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20151001-the-growing-link-between-intelligence-communities-and-academia>

Oct 01 – The idea of university professors or students working with the FBI or CIA probably makes you raise your eyebrows.

But then perhaps you’re picturing someone like the fictional Henry McCord in *Madam Secretary*. He’s a Georgetown theology professor who was asked to plant a bug for the National Security Agency (NSA) at the home of a scholar believed to be connected to a terrorist.



Such covert operations do happen. But mostly, professors will be called to deliver a guest lecture to agents or a university will be contracted to help with research. This is true for organizations in the United States like the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the NSA, and for their counterparts elsewhere in the world.

Such interactions make even academics wary. A tenured professor in the United States tends to be a liberal who is suspicious of the intelligence community's (IC) methods and activities overseas.

But the tactics used by America's current and potential future enemies are constantly changing. This volatility and diversity of threats means that the IC needs higher education's help.

Intelligence post-9/11

The events of September 11 2001 were a catalyst for change in the intelligence profession. In the fourteen years since, the number of institutions associated with the field has grown so "large, so unwieldy and so secretive that no one knows how much money it costs, how many people it employs, how many programs exist within it or exactly how many agencies do the same work," according to a two-year investigation published by the *Washington Post* in 2010.

The IC has transformed and greatly expanded to address the shortfalls that became evident after 9/11. One of its moves was to expand the CIA's Sherman Kent's School of Intelligence Analysis which opened in May 2000 and became part of the new CIA University founded in 2002. Mainstream academia also started to develop specialized degrees in intelligence, homeland security and national defence.

Those outside the IC may question why we need structures and organizations like the CIA, FBI and others.

In his 2014 book *Scientific Methods of Inquiry for Intelligence Analysis*, academic Professor

Hank Prunckun explains that intelligence is important because it allows control to be exercised in a given situation – and control equals power.

Prunckun calls intelligence "an exact science based on sound qualitative and quantitative research methods."

His book forms part of the Security and Professional Intelligence Education Series, another resource developed for the emerging IC after September 11. This is a range of

books focusing on intelligence, foreign policy, national security and business intelligence.

Some universities have already recognized the role and value of intelligence. There are a number of new bachelors and master's degrees, particularly in the United States,

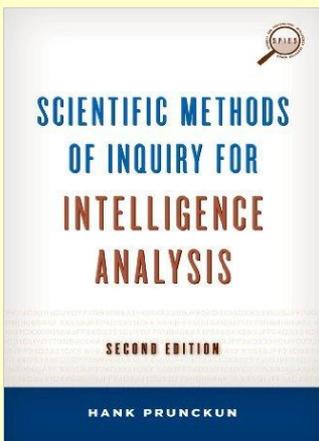
which focus on the areas of intelligence and national security.

Graduating into intelligence agencies

The goal of these new university degrees is to help create the next generation of professionals for the IC. One of the pluses of this arrangement is that universities have four years to develop skills like critical thinking and report writing. Intelligence organizations have only a limited amount of time to teach these abilities.

Here are five skills or characteristics that students who want to work in intelligence communities can develop at university.

1. A global focus: students need to start understanding how the world works. Many universities offer basic global politics courses, but regional focus minors, say in African geopolitics or the working of South East Asia, are helpful too. Students considering a career in intelligence should also try to study overseas to broaden their horizons.
2. An inquisitive nature: thinking critically is arguably the most important skill one can develop in universities. Universities need to train problem-solvers who understand analytic methodologies and strategic concepts – and who can apply that knowledge. My conversations with staff from organizations like the NSA show they want young, creative thinkers who can think out of the box to identify gaps or problems. They don't want "yes" men and women.
3. Technological savvy: a minor in technology is recommended in this era of internet saturation and "big data."
4. A sense of immediacy: when I say *current* affairs, I mean seriously current. Universities must be quick to adapt to changing concepts and threats – like offering courses in cybersecurity or the IS.
5. Communication skills: intelligence agents must be



able to communicate effectively in writing, in a boardroom or in an elevator when they have just seconds with a director or policymaker.

Multilingualism is a huge bonus, too.

Research is another area where academia can contribute to the IC. It can be used to fill in gaps. There is also a major role for university students in open source intelligence — information that is already publicly available but needs to be gathered and analyzed.

Students are often the same age as those who are joining extremist groups, and they are familiar with the latest social media platforms. They know what to look for and where to find it.

What does the future hold?

It's early days for intelligence studies as a university subject or academic discipline. In many ways, it is like criminology 100 years ago. Then, criminology was trying to distinguish itself as a unique specialty within the emerging disciplines of psychology, sociology and economics. Specific societies and journals were created. Observations, experiments and theories were developed.

The number of universities offering an intelligence studies-related degree started with a handful. It has now expanded to a few dozen. Universities are starting to develop curricula that feature practical real-world exercises and structural analytical techniques. This is often happening in collaboration with the IC. Like most businesses or agencies do, universities are starting to develop specific niches.

This expansion is being led by the International Association for Intelligence Education (IAFIE), which was formed in June 2004. Its mission is to advance research, knowledge and professional development in intelligence education. It is becoming more truly "international" as organizations like the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies and Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers come on board.

The field will only grow. It's a necessary expansion to produce the professionals needed to ensure America's national security and that of its allies for generations to come.

Scott Firsing Research Fellow, International Relations, Monash University.

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U.S. has no strategy to stop Americans from traveling overseas to join jihadists: House panel

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20151001-u-s-has-no-strategy-to-stop-americans-from-traveling-overseas-to-join-jihadists-house-panel>

Oct 01 – The House Homeland Security Committee's bipartisan Foreign Fighter Task Force released its final report at a Tuesday press conference. The Committee says that the Task Force conducted an extensive, six month review to assess the severity of the threat from individuals who leave home to join jihadist groups overseas and to identify potential security gaps.

With world leaders meeting at the United Nations this week to discuss the foreign fighter threat, the Committee presented thirty-two key findings and recommendations to counter terrorist travel. According to the final report, we are witnessing the largest global convergence of jihadists in history in Syria, and foreign fighters have taken the lead in recruiting a new generation of terrorists to spread terror back home.

Key Findings:

- Despite concerted efforts to stem the flow, we have largely failed to stop Americans from traveling overseas to join jihadists. Of the hundreds of Americans who have sought to travel to the conflict zone in Syria and Iraq, authorities have only interdicted a fraction of them.
- The U.S. government lacks a national strategy for combating terrorist travel and has not produced one in nearly a decade.
- Gaping security weaknesses overseas — especially in Europe — are putting the U.S. homeland in danger by making it easier for aspiring foreign fighters to migrate to terrorist hotspots and for jihadists to return to the West.

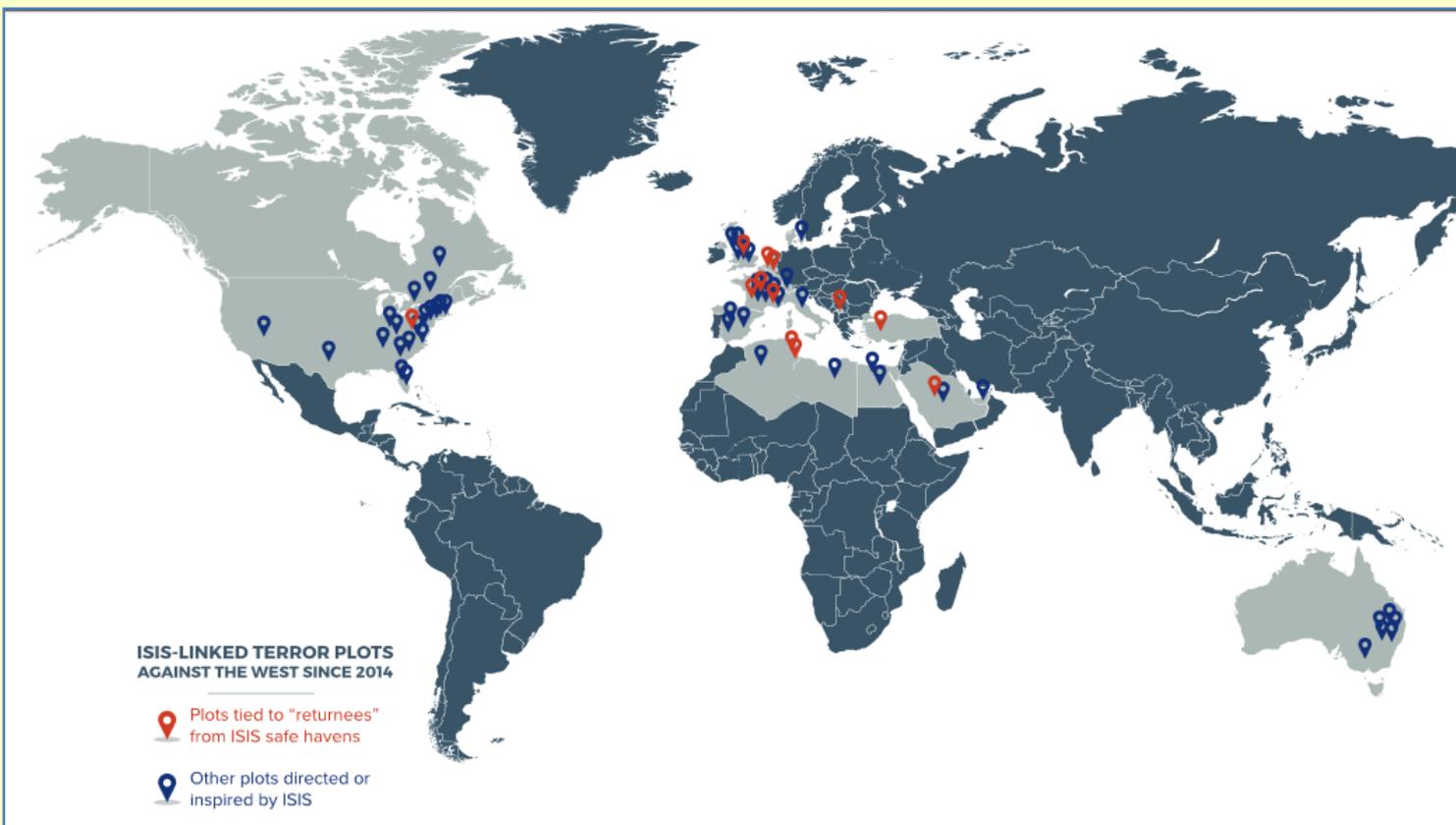
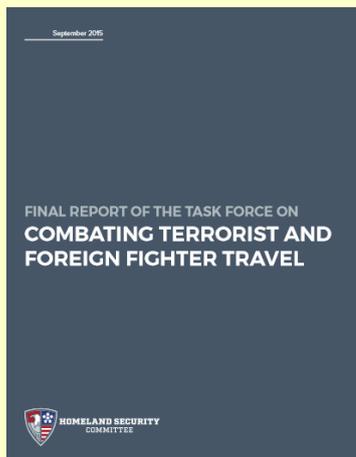


“It is clear that our nation faces a grave and growing threat from foreign fighters,” said Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas). “Sadly, global efforts have failed to stop the flow of these aspiring jihadists into Syria, and we have already seen ‘returnees’ from the conflict zone come home to America and Europe and plot acts of terror. Even more, those still on the battlefield are radicalizing their peers online and inciting them to launch homegrown attacks. I

commend the Task Force for their work on this serious homeland security dilemma, and in

The Task Force has found that although there are serious government efforts to address the radicalization of foreign fighters, there is much more we can do in terms of sharing information with our international partners, assisting law enforcement, and bolstering community awareness. This report is the result of six months of detailed work on addressing this threat, and I want to thank the bipartisan group of task force members for completing it.”

“This task force has devoted six months to examining the dangers of foreign fighter travel and America’s strategy to combat this multifaceted global threat,” said Republican Lead, Representative John Katko (R-New York). “It is clear that this is an uncontainable threat that must be confronted. As we move forward to implement the findings of this report, it is critical that we focus on boosting global



light of their findings, I urge world leaders at the United Nations to redouble their efforts to combat terrorist travel.”

“The alarming threat of extremist ideology possibly influencing foreign fighters is very apparent in today’s world,” said Ranking Member Bennie Thompson (D-Mississippi). “The Task Force’s report is a step in stemming this trend – it outlines specific findings and sets up a path for us to address them going forward.

intelligence measures, producing an updated national strategy, halting the online recruitment of Americans by terrorist groups, and encouraging more efficient information sharing between state, local and federal law enforcement. Combating this ever-evolving terrorist threat will require a smart, coordinated, and international effort, and I thank Chairman McCaul and my



colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their commitment to this long-term fight.”

“The Task Force’s report was done in a bipartisan manner and provides bipartisan proposals,” said Democratic Lead, Representative Loretta Sanchez (D-

California).“These are real threats, requiring real solutions and commitments. Moving forward, it is critical that we continue to tackle this problem together in order to facilitate action and progress.”

— *Read more in [Final Report of the Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel \(Homeland Security Committee, September 2015\)](#)*

UAE to host mega security training city

Source: http://www.gulfconstructiononline.com/news/162233_UAE-to-host-mega-security-training-city.html

Aug 01 – **Abu Dhabi is set to see the rise of a state-of-the-art city over 1 sq km for training professionals in the science of crisis and disaster management.**

Known as Jaheziya, the city being built by Abu Dhabi-based Tawazun company will be a

management from the various agencies can train, communicate and interact with their counterparts while performing the operations in realistic settings.

It will serve as a platform to provide scenario-based training of single and multiple events in



training facility for complex disaster management potential scenarios, bringing together multi-agency personnel from the armed forces, civil defence agencies, health authorities, humanitarian, non-governmental organisations and other agencies in simulating potential crises.

It is designed to re-enact and recreate past incidents and perceived future threats so that professionals in the fields of safety, security, emergencies management, crisis and disaster

various training zones.

Tawazun has already appointed Aecom to start work on Jaheziya. As per the agreement, Aecom will work with Tawazun entities Jaheziya and Tawazun Industrial Park (TIP) in developing the safety, security and disaster management city at ICAD IV in Mussafah.

Jaheziya chairman Ali Mohamed Musleh Al Ahbabi comments: “Jaheziya is a very strategic project and has been perceived to



evolve into the most sought-after facility both in the region and internationally for multi-agency and intra/inter agencies training in the fields of safety, security, emergency preparedness and crisis and disaster management. It is also the biggest of its kind in the region.”

Jaheziya will cover all the industries and sectors with a high degree of potential hazards such as maritime, rail transport, construction, medical emergencies, aviation, industrial, CBRN and Hazmat (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear and hazardous materials) and fire-fighting. The facilities will be supported by accommodation, and classroom facilities set in a community environment.

Commenting on the contract award, Riad Zaki Al Nashef, executive vice-president Aecom, Middle East and managing director, UAE and Oman, says: “Aecom is proud to partner with Tawazun Safety Security and Disaster Management City (TSSDMC) in providing project management and construction supervision services for its new disaster training facility in the UAE emirate. This is a unique and challenging project that builds upon Aecom’s 50-year record of contributing to the development of the UAE and upon our current works with the Abu Dhabi Government and the UAE military services.

“Initiated by Tawazun, Jaheziya is in line with our government’s vision to sustain and enhance the nation’s capacity and capability to protect its communities, assets and vital infrastructure for creating a ready and resilient nation in an ever-changing world. **Jaheziya will provide training with local and international accreditation in line with the**

national and global standards and will be fully operational by 2019,” adds Saif Al Hajeri, the CEO of Tawazun.

Jaheziya will work hand in hand with its stakeholders to develop the new city which will offer training grounds to the armed forces, police forces, civil defence agencies, ministries and municipalities, port authorities, transport authorities, health authorities, oil and gas, energy, construction and other industry sector, nuclear and biological plants, and chemical factories, education councils, schools, colleges, higher education institutions, research and development (R&D) centres, humanitarian aid agencies, and non-governmental organisations.

The new city is expected to be completely operational by 2019.

Jaheziya’s unique facilities include a number of training wings that offer a range of scenario-based training programmes which cover various aspects of emergency response in a number of different environments. Training will cover natural or man-made incidents, such as earthquakes, building collapses, explosions, fires, flooding, oil spills, health epidemics, marine rescue and others that are identified as locally, regionally and globally-relevant today.

Jaheziya will be active in the fields of onshore and offshore rescue and fire-fighting, safety and emergency response, to national and international standards such as National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), International Maritime Organization (IMO), Offshore Petroleum Industry Training Organization (Opito), First Aid International, NTA and the UAE Civil Defence.

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Dissident republican terror attack “highly likely”: Northern Ireland police

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20151002-dissident-republican-terror-attack-highly-likely-northern-ireland-police>

Oct 02 – **Northern Ireland’s most senior counter-terrorism officers say that a dissident republican terror attack is “highly likely.”**

Will Kerr, Police Service of Northern Ireland assistant chief constable, said on Thursday that the threat from the New IRA, Continuity IRA, and Óglaigh na hÉireann (ONH) was at present severe.

The *Guardian* reports that Kerr issued his warning of an imminent attack by dissident

republican groups during a briefing to the Policing Board in Belfast – an organization consisting of politicians and community leaders which monitors the running of the PSNI in the region.

The chief constable of Northern Ireland, George Hamilton, appearing alongside Kerr, agreed with Kerr on the danger posed by the three main armed republican groups which oppose the peace process.



He said that how the PSNI respond to the threat is "critically important for public confidence."

Kerr and Hamilton noted that the New IRA, CIRA, and ONH have PSNI officers among their prime targets, but that the threat is not affecting recruitment, with 800 applicants already for a new hiring drive launched on Thursday morning.

Analysts say that PSNI recruits from the Catholic/Nationalist community in Northern Ireland remain high on the dissident terror groups' hit list. They note that Sinn Fein has given its backing to the PSNI, but that there has been a drop in the number of Catholic/Nationalist recruits to the police.

Last year, only 17 percent of those who applied were from Catholic/Nationalist backgrounds.

In 2011, Catholic recruit PC Ronan Kerr was killed by republican dissidents who were once members of the IRA's East Tyrone Brigade. They placed a bomb under his car and it

exploded as he got into his car to drive to work from his home in Omagh.

Earlier this year in an interview with the *Guardian*, Will Kerr said the main armed republican groups which oppose the ceasefire would aim to ramp up their violence ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising against British rule in 2016.

Kerr also noted that the republican dissidents had honed their skills and improved their rocket and bomb-making technology by studying improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used by the Taliban in Afghanistan and Islamist insurgents in Iraq.

Kerr estimated that there was a "hardcore of several hundred" hardline republican activists keeping the armed republican campaigns going.

He said there was "certainly an ambition" by dissident republicans dramatically to increase their violence in the lead-up to the centenary of the 1916 rising.

Russia's Syrian Strikes May Fuel Global Jihad, Experts Say

Source: <http://www.voanews.com/content/russian-sir-strikes-accelerant-for-global-jihad/2986261.html>



The start of Russian airstrikes to prop up embattled Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government could trigger a new wave of foreign fighters, strengthening jihadists across the region, experts say.

U.S. intelligence officials have been warning about potential fallout since Moscow began expanding its military footprint in Syria earlier this month. But such calls have taken on

greater urgency with Russian bombs falling on Syrian targets as of Wednesday.

"There's no doubt extremists will look to amplify their recruiting pitches to would-be foreign fighters by capitalizing on Russia's expanded role in Syria," a U.S. counterterrorism official told VOA. "It could also help energize jihadi efforts both inside and outside Syria."



The concerns are being echoed by activists and former diplomats, who charge Russia is playing into the hands of groups like the Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra by deliberately targeting civilian areas.

"The Russian action is going to be an

Anticipating fight

Already, some Syrians are relishing the prospects of a fight with Moscow.

"A lot of Syrians are looking forward to facing up to the Russians face to face and talking quite loudly about Afghanistan and other such quagmires that the Russians got themselves into," Shaikh said.

They could soon get their chance.

"While Russia claims that it will not use ground troops and will only limit its involvement to air support, this will not necessarily stay set in stone," said IHS Country Risk Analyst Alex Kokachov, pointing to Russia's initial denials of using ground forces in Crimea and eastern Ukraine.

U.S. officials concerned

It is a scenario that worries U.S. officials. "Many modern terrorist groups are rooted in the legacy of battling the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan," a counterterror official said. "It would not be surprising if ISIL features the Russian buildup as a tie into their apocalyptic narrative, and to help bridge the generational divide among jihadists with Moscow's actions in Afghanistan and Syria as bookends."

accelerant for global jihad," said Salman Shaikh, a former special assistant at the United Nations who is now founder and chief executive officer of the Shaikh Group. "You can hear 'Allahu Akhbar' – God is great – "being shouted from Europe and its streets, even [in] the United States and Southeast Asia," he said.

The Russian Orthodox Church may have provided jihadists with additional motivation Wednesday when it issued a statement in support of the airstrikes, calling them part of a "holy war."

Former diplomats caution that other countries are also likely to contribute to the escalation, sending more arms, money and other support to both jihadists and other, more mainstream opposition groups.

"Everyone is very scared," said Bassam Barabandi, a Syrian diplomat turned activist, who spent parts of Wednesday communicating with contacts in areas targeted by the Russian airstrikes. "We don't want people to come to fight Russia in Syria."

"The only benefit will be [for] the extremists," he added.

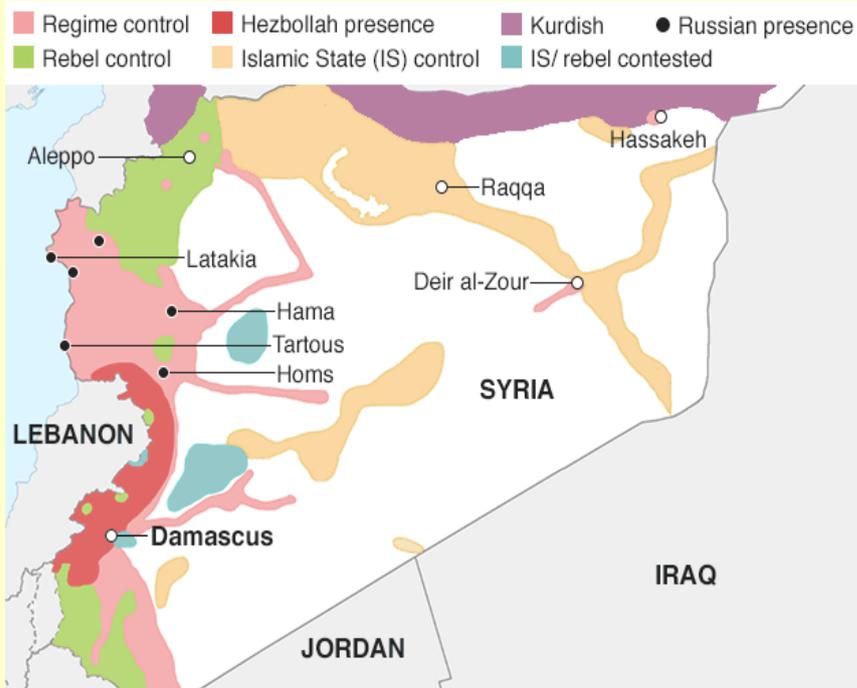
The Islamic State's Balkan 'Strongholds'

By Ebi Spahiu

Source:[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=44446&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=26&cHash=1cb1cd30ba92a04fab2e9ca7d31e89c7#.Vg-c65c42z8](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=44446&tx_ttnews[backPid]=26&cHash=1cb1cd30ba92a04fab2e9ca7d31e89c7#.Vg-c65c42z8)

Oct 02 – To the Islamic State militant group, foreign fighters from the Balkans have particular importance due to their historical ties to Islam, their homelands' proximity to other Western Europe and because ethnic disputes in the region remain close to the surface. A

video released in June 2015 by the organization's al-Hayat media center, for instance, emphasizes the strategic importance of the Balkan Peninsula to the Islamic State by lengthily analyzing the historical



Source: ISW



significance Balkan Muslims purportedly had in defying “European crusaders” during the Ottoman Empire, as well as enduring hardships during Enver Hoxha’s and Josip Broz Tito’s Communist regimes in Albania and Yugoslavia respectively. [1] In the last issue of Dabiq, the Islamic State’s English language magazine, the jihadist organization again continued to refer to the importance of the Balkans and also calls for its followers in the region to conduct lone wolf attacks. [2]



A Bosnian house flies the Islamic State flag (Source: Lokalno).

The region’s Muslim communities in Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia still largely practice a moderate vision of Islam, based on Hanafi jurisprudence and Sufi traditions inherited from decades of Ottoman rule. However, Saudi-led efforts following the fall of the region’s communist regimes have attempted to make the Balkans a bastion of Salafist and Wahhabist doctrines and practice. One outcome of this process is that in the last two years, over 1,000 foreign fighters from the Western Balkans have joined the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq ([Illyria Press](#), August 7). These recruits come from Muslim communities throughout the region, including Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro.

During the past year, the authorities in the region have conducted a series of arrests of groups and individual imams purportedly involved in inspiring and facilitating the flow of foreign fighters to the Islamic State. In Albania, for instance, the authorities undertook a series of security operations in March 2014 against an alleged network of recruiters based in two mosques on the outskirts of the capital Tirana, and arrested nine individuals on grounds of facilitating recruitment for terrorism, financing of terrorist activities. These included two imams allegedly instrumental in radicalizing the group’s followers. In addition, since August 2014, the security authorities in Kosovo have

arrested and questioned over 100 individuals during investigations into the recruitment of young Albanian men and women from Kosovo to the Islamic State ([Gazeta Express](#) [Prishtina], January 17). Similar operations have been conducted in FYROM, Bosnia and Serbia against individuals accused of involvement in militant recruitment on behalf of the Islamic State. Although most of these policing operations have proved successful in identifying and isolating the main lines of militant recruitment, questions remain over the continuity of hardline religious doctrine in these areas and ways it is being utilized to establish strongholds of support among smaller communities in the countries most affected. Even though most countries in the region remain keen to join the European Union (EU), high levels of corruption, organized crime and a weaker and less appealing EU have created an environment where hardline ideologies can spread, especially in countries with predominantly Muslim populations, such as Kosovo or Bosnia. The lack of preventative measures against this radical upswing may potentially make religious radicalism one of the region’s greatest security threats, alongside organized crime.

Islamic State ‘Strongholds’

Weak governance and poor rule of law, and a corresponding limited government presence in remote areas, is a problem common to many Balkan countries. Communal anger over high levels of unemployment and extensive government corruption has been further stoked by a widespread dissatisfaction with a prolonged EU integration process. These elements have accordingly become the centerpiece of the grievance narrative that many Islamist leaders have promoted in order to gain local support and fuel anti-Western and anti-government sentiments among their followers. In addition, this dissatisfaction with the status quo also explains the gradual increase in people from Kosovo and Albania migrating to Western Europe in hopes of finding employment. For instance, Albanian migrants rank third after Syrians and Afghans seeking asylum in Germany ([Panorama](#) [Tirana], September 19).

As state institutions lack credibility, radical imams and similar groups are filling the vacuum, while additionally



replacing moderate religious leaders and other societal actors in these communities. Several testimonies from local civil society groups based in northeastern Albania, for instance, describe the rapid transformation of local religious life and an increased commitment towards following imams among youths, whose lives are increasingly shaped by religious doctrine in the absence of a strong school system and meaningful employment opportunities. [3] Similarly, a recent report found that youth in Kosovo are also becoming increasingly conservative, while their main



reference points for spiritual and intellectual guidance are also imams [[Tema](#) [Tirana], August 10). While religiosity was already an integral component of a society that has historically promoted peaceful co-existence between religions, many in Kosovo have gradually embraced Salafist and Wahhabist ideologies, leading to a shift in their views and attitudes, while hundreds of religious hardliners from Kosovo have also joined the Islamic State in recent years. Kacanik, a small town in Kosovo near the border with FYROM, is a particular example of where radical religious rhetoric has flourished and despite recent efforts to curb its influence, many radical imams in the area are still able to carry on giving sermons to radical youth despite being in hiding from the authorities ([Telegrafi](#) [Prishtina], September 1, [Telegraph](#), August 23).

In addition to Balkan youths' changing approach to religion, hardliners sympathetic to the Islamic State have apparently also

established a physical presence in the region by purchasing vacant real estate along the former lines of contact between the local warring factions in the 1990s conflicts. This has been particularly visible in Bosnia, where these types of properties are often in badly damaged remote areas that have been abandoned by state authorities ([Avaz](#) [Sarajevo], May 28). According to another report, this one on Bosnian fighters in Syria, these types of purchases are common among local Salafists, and many known Islamic State foreign fighters from Bosnia have visited these villages in the past. [4] Current communities inhabiting these villages do not shy from advertising their support for the Islamic State, either via flying the group's flags or through displaying other symbols of the group ([Localno](#) [Skopje], May 28).

Organized Crime and Religious Radicalism

Although most regional security officials and security experts treat the threats posed by religious extremism and organized crime as separate concerns—growing out of separate networks—there are strong possibilities that these two elements may combine in future, as Islamist groups, such as the Islamic State, attempt to establish their presence in other parts of Europe. Throughout the past year, for instance,

there have been several media reports and events that reflect that such combination is possible in a region marked by trafficking, prostitution and political links to organized crime.

This emerging nexus between criminals and religious radicals is particularly visible in Lazarat, a village in southern Albania infamous for its production and export of cannabis. There have been several instances of unrest in the area, with authorities issuing arrest warrants for five young men allegedly responsible for a series of explosions near Lazarat in March, which resulted in no reports of death or injuries ([BalkanWeb](#), May 23). Facebook profiles in the name of the five men showed that they were vocal supporters of the Islamic State, but also led glamorous lives, involving expensive cars and Mediterranean trips, despite outstanding domestic and international arrest warrants. Arbion Aliko, one of the main individuals involved, was



apprehended in June, following a shootout between the young men and police, on charges of carrying out acts for terrorist purposes and over the killing of Ibrahim Basha, a special forces officer on duty in Lazarat. According to a Facebook profile in Aliko's name, which was later taken down, he expressed his admiration for Lavdrim Muhaxheri (an infamous Albanian-Kosovar jihadist with the Islamic State), and other known Albanian jihadists reportedly fighting for the jihadist organization. Aliko had also repeatedly called for action to take back Lazarat from state control. [5]

Although direct links between organized criminal groups and IS supporters in Albania were denied by the authorities, these events exposed the potential for organized crime to converge with religious radicalism and violent extremism in Albania ([BalkanWeb](#), June 29). The events in Lazarat shocked public opinion in Albania, but they also suggest the possible emergence of other nexuses between radicals and active criminal groups elsewhere in the country. Albania has a long history of being a transit and destination country for cannabis, heroin and cocaine, and also has long been considered a source country for cannabis going to EU countries. The Albanian government has sought to tackle this problem; for instance, in 2014, Albanian police undertook a massive raid on Lazarat that was intended to end the village's production and export of cannabis to Western Europe. However, although Albania's interior minister, Saimir Tahiri, has recently claimed that almost all marijuana plants in northern and southern parts of the country, which are particularly known for their high production of cannabis, were destroyed as a result of police operations, questions remain over who managed these areas and profited from their lucrative revenues ([Fax](#) [Tirana], August 16). On the other hand, for hundreds of local residents, drug production is a valuable source of income in the absence of other employment opportunities, and the destruction of these plantations poses an economic threat to them due to the lack of alternatives. These

areas are particularly vulnerable to the influence of radical religious leaders, as well as criminal groups that still maintain their own influence, in absence of police control and weak institutions. This situation illustrates that efforts to tackle the drugs trade also risk boosting radicalization.

Conclusion

Convergences between organized crime groups and traditional terrorist organizations are nothing new. Frequent evidence of direct linkages is seen between terrorist organizations and criminal networks who seek to capitalize upon each others' skills and assets, despite divergences in ideologies and objectives. For instance, the U.S. National Security Council has said that "today's criminal networks are fluid, striking new allegiances with other networks around the world and engaging in a wide range of illicit activities, including cybercrime and providing support for terrorism." [6] Although details of direct links between the Islamic State and organized groups in Albania, especially since the recent events in Lazarat, are not confirmed, the rampant corruption in all sectors of society, including the judiciary, and allegations of prostitution and drug links to the political establishment mean that Albania and the rest of the Balkan region are particularly vulnerable to extremist groups looking to establish their presence in Europe. In addition, according to several unofficial sources, in Albania in particular, political polarization and electoral fraud have led religious leaders to support particular political agendas in exchange for delivering votes, thus leading to the willingness of authorities and politicians to overlook illicit activities that these individuals may be involved in. This underlines that high levels of corruption at administrative and political levels in affected Balkan countries can create additional vacuums in which religious radicalism can take hold, potentially increasing threats not only in the region itself but also further afield.

Notes

1. See: <http://jihadology.net/2015/06/04/al-%E1%B8%A5ayat-media-center-presents-a-new-video-message-from-the-islamic-state-honor-is-in-jihad-a-message-to-the-people-of-the-balkans/>.
2. "An Opportunity for Noble Deeds," *Dabiq* (August), pg. 54.
3. Author's own discussions with civil society representatives based in different regions in Albania, September 2015.
4. "The Lure of the Syrian War," *The Atlantic Initiative*



http://atlanticinitiative.org/images/THE_LURE_OF_THE_SYRIAN_WAR_THE_FOREIGN_FIGHTERS_BOSNIAN_CONTINGENT/The_Lure_of_the_Syrian_War_-_The_Foreign_Fighters_Bosnian_Contingent.pdf.

5. Arbion Aliko Lazarat, Facebook profile <https://www.facebook.com/ar.al.18?fref=ts>.

6. "Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime," U.S. National Security Council, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/nsc/transnational-crime/strategy>.

Ebi Spahiu is a researcher on Central Asian and Western Balkan Affairs, focusing on gender and religious extremism.

Islamist who took part in destroying Timbuktu monuments sent to the Hague to face charges

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150928-islamist-who-took-part-in-destroying-timbuktu-monuments-sent-to-the-hague-to-face-charges>



42

Sept 28 – An Islamic extremist charged with



involvement in the destruction of religious buildings in the historic city of Timbuktu in Mali in 2012 has been arrested Saturday and sent to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Legal scholars note that Ahmad Al Mahdi Al Faqi, aka Abu Tourab, is the first suspect in

ICC custody charged with destroying religious or historical monuments, which is a war crime. Al Faqi was arrested in neighboring Niger, and the Niger government surrendered him to the ICC after the court issued an arrest warrant for him.

No date was immediately set for his arraignment.

The court said in a statement he was a member of Ansar Dine, an Islamic extremist group with links to al-Qaeda which ruled the break-away northern Mali from April 2012 to February 2013. Ansar Dine joined with separatist Tuareg forces to drive the Mali army out of northern Mali – an



area the size of France – and declare the independent state of Azawad.

Abu Tourab is charged with participation in the destruction of ten historic buildings, including mausoleums and a mosque in Timbuktu.

The BBC reports that UNESCO has listed the entire city of Timbuktu is listed as a world heritage site. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Timbuktu wielded considerable influence in the Muslim world, and was the site of 180 schools and universities in which tens of thousands of students from all over the Muslim world received their training.

The Islamic radicals who took over northern Mali in 2012 destroyed fourteen of the city's sixteen mausoleums, typically one-room

structures where the tombs of the city's great thinkers were located. The Islamists consider such structures as totems of idolatry.

Under the guidance of archeologists and religious experts, fourteen mausoleums destroyed in 2012 have since been restored with UN funding.

In 2012 the Mali government submitted a detailed request to the ICC to investigate crimes committed on its territory. Prosecutors opened an investigation in 2013, after French expeditionary forces drove the Islamists out of northern Mali and unified the country. Abu Tourab is the first suspect detained as a result of the ICC investigation.

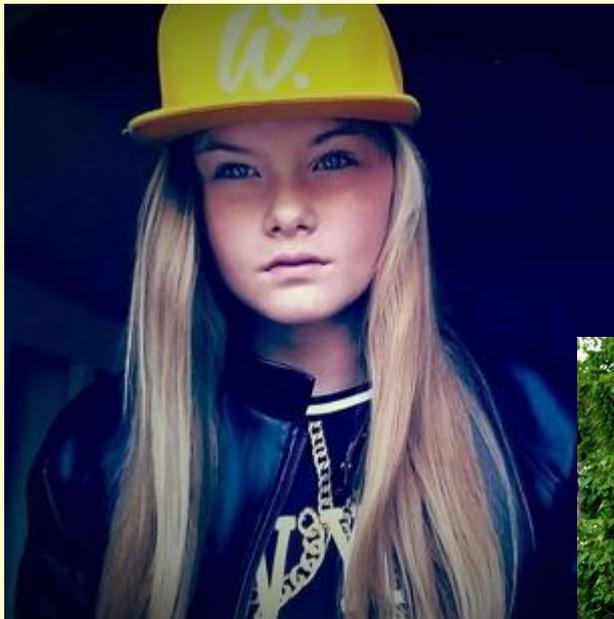
EDITOR'S COMMENT: Wow! ICC has a prisoner to excuse its presence! Of course we cannot blame legal authorities for that – they do not arrest those responsible for atrocities planet-wide. How much it will cost this trial? It reminds me the pirates brought to justice and the astronomical costs going along with that – for what?



Danish girl, 15, stabs mother to death after watching ISIS beheading videos

Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/girl-15-stabs-mother-death-watching-isis-videos-article-1.2360953>

Sept 15 – A 15-year-old girl in Denmark who slaughtered her mother with a kitchen knife after watching sickening ISIS beheading videos online has been convicted of murder.



Lisa Borch was sentenced Tuesday, along with her Islamic extremist boyfriend, to nine years in prison following the brutal slay of Tina Römer Holtegaard, the Mirror reported.

Prosecutors said the baby-faced blonde teenager and her 29-year-old radical lover Bakhtiar Mohammed Abdulla stabbed Holtegaard at least 20 times in her home in Kvissel, Denmark, last October.



"This murder was cold-blooded, ice cold and committed in a bestial manner," prosecutor Karina Skou said in court. Borch had become obsessed with the terrorist group after masked militant David

spending hours glued to her computer watching Jihadi John lob off the heads of British hostages Haines and Alan Henning on YouTube.

"She watched them the whole evening long," prosecutors said.



Police found Borch calmly playing on her phone as her mother lay covered in blood, according to the Mirror. They found the sick ISIS videos on her computer.

The teen blamed the murder on her boyfriend, who she fell in love with after meeting at a refugee center near her home, prosecutors said.

The disturbed duo had planned to flee to Syria together to fight for ISIS after killing Holtegaard who was against their relationship, according to the Mirror.

Abdulla was sentenced to 13 years in prison, after which he'll be expelled from Denmark.

EDITOR'S COMMENT: Lethal beauty! A story that was not covered enough by European mainstream media but it is an alarming event for now and the future. Exposure to the unbelievable brutality of IS might provoke similar incidents fueled by the multiculturalism interaction in various EU countries.

Islamic State in our back-yard (Balkans)



Message sent to Albanian TV network (third time) – Greek Prime Minister is the second from right in the photo below next to the map of "Greater Albania" where Greek territories are included.

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Somalia: Illegal Overfishing and the Return of Somalia's Pirates

Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201510061589.html>

Oct 06 – A hundred years ago, it was a bustling port that served the vibrant fishing community living along Somalia's coastline, the longest on mainland Africa.

Now, Durduri is a sun-bleached, wind-swept, white-sand graveyard of stone structures. There is no harbour, no jetty. The drying and smoking house is just a tumble of bricks.

This is one of many historical coastal trading towns that have risen and fallen with empires. When the busy trade routes moved away, fishing was one of the few lifelines left.

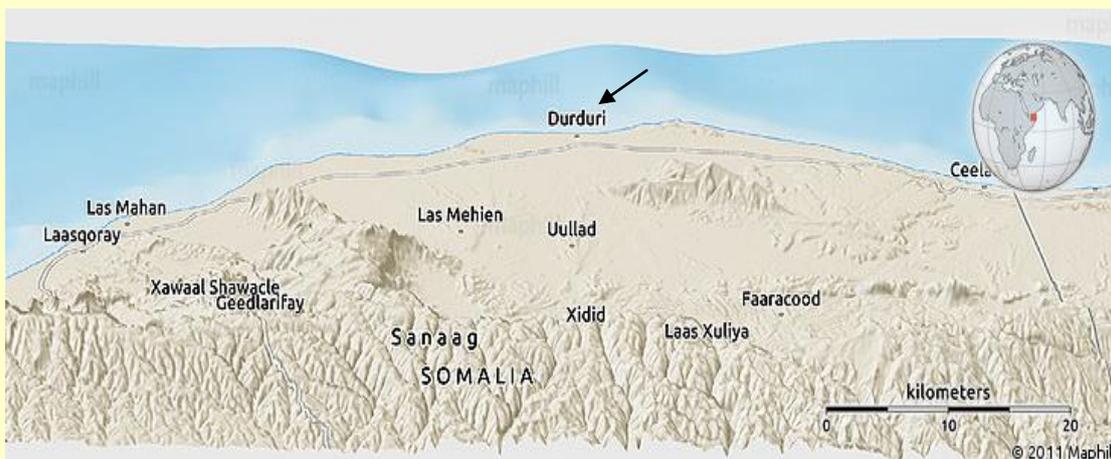
Talk to locals now and you will find this too has dried up - they say there are no more fish in the sea. They blame not the pirates who brought the attention of international law enforcement to Somalia's waters, but the foreign fishing boats that have plundered sea-life stocks.

And if things don't change, they say, a return to piracy will be their only way of survival.

'They take everything'

Ahmed Mohamed Ali walks disconsolately along the beach at Durduri, 100 kilometres west of the port city of Bosaso, perched on the northeastern point of Puntland, Somalia's semi-autonomous northern state.





Ali said he was forced to quit fishing, the only job he has ever known, after a foreign fishing ship bore down on him and his colleagues one night at sea. "It was a huge ship. We fled for our lives. Had we not it would have all been over and we'd have been dead," the 27-year-old told Al Jazeera. Large foreign vessels "come at night and take everything", he said, gesturing angrily out to sea. "With their modern machinery, there is nothing left." And the Somali fishermen can't match them. "We don't carry guns; we don't even have any weapons," he said. Ali's accusations are backed up by two new pieces of research, conducted by separate Somali development agencies, which suggest that international fishing vessels - particularly Iranian and Yemeni, but also European ships including Spanish - are illegally exploiting the East African nation's fish stocks on a massive scale.

Legacy of piracy

In a country torn apart by civil war, without a federal government until as recently as 2012 following more than two decades of fighting, the population of 10.5 million largely suffers from a crippling paucity of economic opportunities. Somalis say illegal, unlicensed, and unregulated fishing forced them to turn to piracy 10 years ago in order to recoup their losses. "We got fed up and took guns to the sea," said one Bosaso fisherman, Mohamed Adan Ahmed. Piracy put a stop to illegal fishing, but these findings suggest it was merely a hiatus; now that international anti-piracy task forces have halted the hijackings, illegal fishing vessels have returned. In 2014, 86 percent of Somali fishermen spotted foreign fishing vessels close to the shore, according to a report by international charity Adeso, which conducted interviews down the length of the coastline over a six-month period last year. Sightings were more frequent in Puntland and have more than doubled in the last five years, according to the IUU Fishing in the Territorial Waters of Somalia report.

It first became a problem in the mid-1990s, according to Halimo Isman, who said at the time she was the only fisherwoman working in Durduri's waters. In the new village that has sprung up close to the old port, she told Al Jazeera huge foreign fishing vessels dwarfed the Somalis' small, fibreglass skiffs. "It became impossible to share waters with them." Her family was originally pastoralists, but, like many Somalis, they lost their livestock in a drought, so came to the coast in search of a new livelihood. Isman married a fisherman in 1987 and he taught her how to fish, repair nets, and dry the catch of the day. "Fish, including sharks, were available everywhere," the 55-year-old recalls. But in 1996, she quit. The seas were out of fish, she said. Today, Isman keeps goats and sheep and grows vegetables and date palms on the brackish land.

Search for a better life

Foreign vessels take three times more fish than Somalis do - 132,000 metric tons each year compared to 40,000 by locals -



another report released in September said. From 12 months' research, the agency Secure Fisheries found the amount of fish being harvested is unsustainable. Illegal vessels are harvesting tuna stocks at the maximum capacity, leaving nothing for Somalis, it said. "Piracy can come back because people have



nothing," said elder Saed Jama Yusuf, speaking at the harbour in Bosaso, where his fellow fishermen bemoaned their feeble catches. "We will make preparations, gather our resources for funds."

The federal government's Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources was unavailable for comment, but Minister Mohamed Omar Aymow has previously denied there is a risk of piracy returning.

"There is not a big fear," he told Voice of America in September. "We don't have pirate men who are organised like the group we are fighting against now [Al-Shabab]."

However, in March two Iranian vessels suspected of fishing illegally were seized by Somali pirates, an incident described as the first successful hijacking in three years. The crew of one ship escaped after nearly five months, while the others remain in captivity.

"If the illegal fishing doesn't stop, people will look for alternatives - like piracy, joining al-Shabab, becoming criminals, or migrating," said former fisherman Ali.

Last month, residents of Durduri told Somali news agency Hiiraan Online that members of ISIL had arrived on a boat and taken as many as 40 young men.

With no work available, it is easy for such violent groups to recruit young men, Ali warned.

Will anyone help?

The challenges of policing Somalia's waters are enormous. The 200-nautical-mile economic exclusion zone, representing 830,390 square kilometres, is far larger than its land area.

The maritime police in Bosaso, where human smugglers shelter migrants trying to sail north across the Gulf of Aden - one of the world's busiest shipping lanes - operate on a shoestring budget of less than \$10,000 per year, said Colonel Mohamed Ali Hashi.

Coastguards are volunteers, dressed in makeshift uniforms, cobbling money together for fuel, he told Al Jazeera.

Hashi, the commander of Bosaso's maritime police, said foreign vessels are employing Somalis on board as armed guards, but he has "no speedboats, no firearms".

"If the government doesn't authorise me to fight illegal fishing, I can't," he said. "Since NATO has been here, piracy is down but illegal fishing has increased. NATO and the EU never help us, never give us a hand."

Robert Mazurek, director of the Secure Fisheries agency, told Al Jazeera "the international community has done very little to combat [illegal] fishing in Somali waters".

Asked for a response to the accusation, NATO responded: "Actions to counter illegal fishing would breach the scope and capabilities of the mission."

So what is the way forward for Somalia's fishing industry and security in its waters?

Development organisations want new legislation, improved information sharing between international and regional bodies, increased use of satellite tracking to identify vessels operating there, and investment in local fisheries infrastructure.

"We need more concerted efforts, advocacy, a holistic approach to address both illegal fishing and to support local communities affected by illegal fishing practices," Adeso programme director Abdi Mohamed Dahir told Al Jazeera via email.

Locals such as Ali believe Somalia's rulers must take responsibility.



"We have a government but it's fragile," he said. "A strong government that could protect

our seas would be a solution. There is no other way."

ISIS, al-Qaeda, al-Nusra share near identical ideologies: Report

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20151007-isis-alqaeda-alnusra-share-near-identical-ideologies-report>

Oct 07 – A just-published report, Inside the Jihadi



Mind: Understanding Ideology and Propaganda, analyzes a cross-section of 114 propaganda sources over two years from the three main Salafi-jihadi groups: ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation, which sponsored the report, notes that the three groups share near identical ideologies, challenging the concept that "ISIS is

more extreme than al-Qaeda." Built upon distorted Islamic religious principles, the propaganda produces single-minded focus on violent jihad. The report finds explicit

references to these principles throughout the propaganda:

Ideological values form the moral basis of the groups' actions and are present in 80 percent of all the propaganda sources. These include Islamic creedal values in 62 percent, the values of honor and solidarity with Muslim communities in 68 percent, and explicit references to the end of

days in 42 percent.

Justifications from the Quran, Hadith or from scholarship appear in 87 percent of the propaganda.

Ed Husain, author of *The Islamist: Why I Became an Islamic Fundamentalist, What I Saw Inside, and Why I Left* (2009) and Senior Adviser at the Center on Religion & Geopolitics said:

An initiative of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, the Center on Religion & Geopolitics (CRG) presents informed analysis on the interaction of religion and conflict globally, offering policy responses to meet the scale of the challenge through reports, media commentary, events and policy briefings.

This initiative started as a Web resource called Religion & Geopolitics launched in June 2014. In the last fifteen months it has grown and developed and to recognize this change a more suitable name and description is the Centre on Religion & Geopolitics (CRG).

We are losing the battle of ideas and urgently need to understand and defeat this global ideology. ISIS, al-Qaeda and others kill in the name of religion. They call for a caliphate of slavery, death and destruction. They justify their evil by abusively citing scripture and creating religious certainty in the minds of angry, eager and obedient recruits.

For too long we have shied away from this truth. It is by rallying the best of religion that we defeat the worst of it. It is the language of religion that will uproot this violent ideology. Civil society, governments, Muslim scholars, technology firms and others all have a part to play.'

World leaders have cited ideology as a key challenge. Speaking about how we defeat ISIS, President Barack Obama said last week "This is a long-term campaign — not only against this particular network, but against its ideology... We have to prevent it from radicalizing, recruiting and inspiring others to violence in the first place. And this means defeating their ideology.

"The single best work I have read on the ideological foundations... of jihadi violence"
Professor Bruce Hoffman



Ideologies are not defeated with guns, they're defeated by better ideas — a more attractive and compelling vision."

Bruce Hoffman, director of the Center for Security Studies at Georgetown University, praised the report: "This is the single best work I have read on the ideological foundations and

theoretical underpinnings of the ongoing wave of jihadi violence. Accordingly, it makes a valuable contribution both to the literature on terrorism and radicalization as well as to the measures and efforts needed to most effectively counter the appeal of the jihadi message."

— *Read more in Emman El-Badawy et al., [Inside the Jihadi Mind: Understanding Ideology and Propaganda](#) (Tony Blair Faith Foundation, October 2015)*

Extremist propaganda as advertising?: Terrorists trust Toyota trucks; U.S. tries to track trade

Source: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/10/08/business/extremist-propaganda-advertising-terrorists-trust-toyota-trucks-u-s-tries-track-trade/#.VhYLsSs42z9>



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Oct 08 – Toyota has spoken with U.S. officials about the prominent use of its vehicles by militants in Syria, Iraq and Libya.

"We are supporting the U.S. Treasury Department's broader inquiry into international supply chains and the flow of capital and goods in the Middle East," Toyota spokeswoman Amanda Rice told Kyodo News.

Toyota trucks are conspicuous in extremist propaganda and are often what carry Islamic State group fighters to war, some with large caliber weapons affixed to truck beds.

The company says it prohibits sales to anyone who might modify them for paramilitary or terrorist activities.

There are procedures in place to prevent vehicles from being diverted for unauthorized military use, but Toyota says it's impossible to control channels through which vehicles may be misappropriated or resold by third parties.

The Treasury Department's Terrorism and Financial Intelligence wing monitors monetary transfers and the flow of goods that could aid militants, but the department declined comment on any ongoing inquiry Wednesday.

The militant group's propaganda videos show the terrorists driving a combination of older and newer models and the U.S. believes the Islamic State has recently obtained "hundreds of brand new" Toyota vehicles, U.S. broadcaster ABC News said.

The company's sales operations in Syria ceased in 2012 and regional Toyota distributors do not know how the Islamic State acquired the vehicles, according to the network.

Vehicles from other automakers have been featured in the videos, such as those from Hyundai Motor Co. and Isuzu Motors Ltd.,



the report said, but the Toyota models have become “fixtures” for the Islamic State. When the Islamic State paraded through the northern Syrian city of Raqqa, more than two-thirds of the vehicles in the convoy appeared to be from Toyota, the broadcaster reported. Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Mark Wallace, who currently heads an organization that studies the financial networks

of terrorists, told ABC News that the vehicles “have effectively become almost part of the ISIS brand.”

Wallace told the network that the Toyota vehicles are seen in almost every Islamic State propaganda video and his group urged the company earlier this year to do more in tracking how terrorists acquire their vehicles.

ISIS terrorists told 'women will become Muslim if 10 fighters rape her'

Source: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/isis-terrorists-told-women-become-6602066>



ISIS terrorists are raping women in the sickening belief that it will make them Muslim, terrified victims have said.

Reports from Iraq say the terror group is using religion to justify horrific rape, murder and slavery for women in the country.

Witnesses say the terror group is attacking villages, killing the men and taking away women to abuse.

One 22-year-old victim was sold into slavery when ISIS took over her village in Sinjar.

Speaking to CNN, she tells how a terrorist

picked her out and raped her before passing her onto 11 of his friends who also raped her. He showed her a letter from his superiors which said that a woman will become a Muslim if ten ISIS men rape her.

The woman, who has remained anonymous, said about her attacker: "He showed me a letter and said, 'This shows any captured women will become Muslim if 10 ISIS fighters rape her.'

"There was a flag of ISIS and a picture of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi."

Russia claims it is currently attacking ISIS positions in Syria.

However, leaders in the West claim it is co-ordinating a pro-Assad air, sea and ground offensive against not just Islamic State but also rebels opposed to the Syrian regime.

Warships have been blitzing rebel positions in Syria with cruise missiles, escalating fears of a massive outbreak of violence across the Middle East.

Syrian ground troops have launched a ground offensive under Russian air cover, backing western fears Moscow is bolstering President Assad and targeting his opposition.

Russia launches missile strikes on ISIS from warships in the Caspian Sea, 900 miles away

ISIS control

Approximate missile trajectories

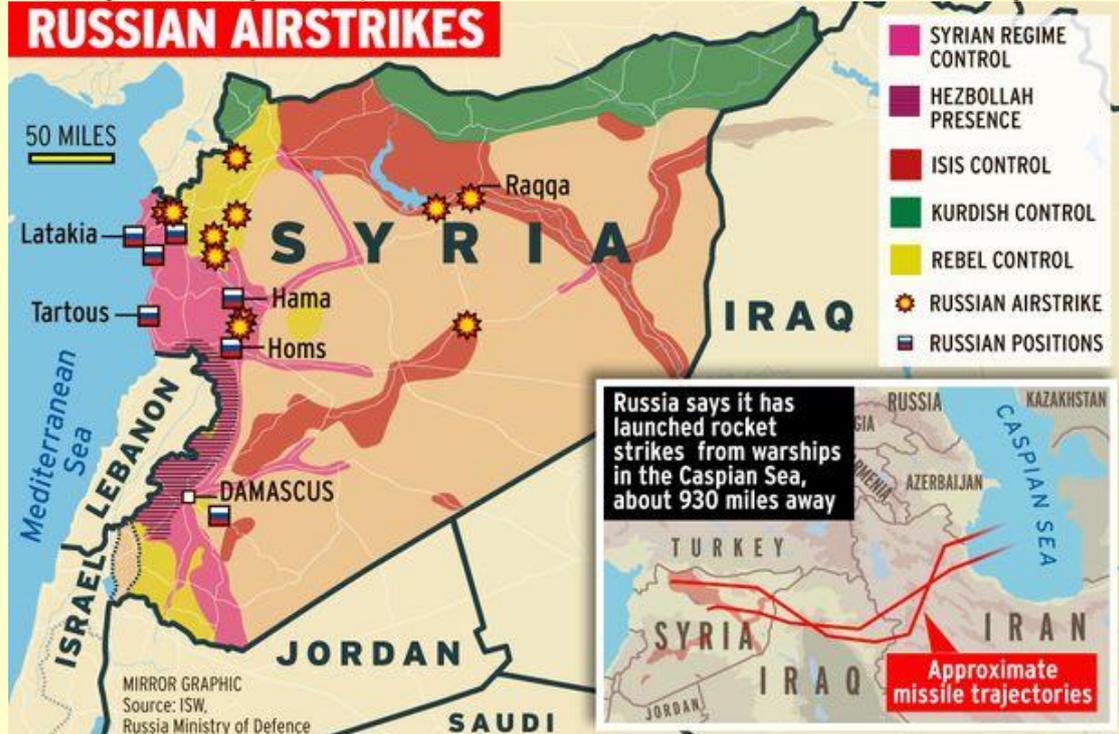
The Russian Kalibr NK (Klub) cruise missile

- 3M-14T variant
- Length: 8.9m
- Warhead: 450kg
- Speed: 0.8 Mach
- Capable of hitting a target within **3 metres** at a range of up to **1,600 miles**
- Flown over Iran and Iraq - at less than **20 metres** altitude to avoid radar detection by Turkey
- Launched from warships the frigate Dagestan and three Corvettes the Grad Sviyazhsk, Uglich and Veliki Ustyug

MIRROR GRAPHIC



Human rights watchdogs have reported a massive increase in civilian deaths since Russia began its air



campaign days ago in the north of Syria - a rebel stronghold where Islamic State is not based. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported "the most intense fighting in months," triggering fears in Western governments that Putin is now fully backing Assad's ground forces. There are even growing concerns Russia is sending to the frontline in Syria "thermobaric" weapons - devastating bombs that suck all the oxygen from the area of the explosion to create a super-hot blast-wave.



Islamic State training new generation of Indonesian terrorists, expert Sidney Jones warns

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-08/islamic-state-training-new-group-of-indonesian-terrorists-expert/6838834>

Oct 09 – The conflict against the Islamic State (IS) militant group in Syria and Iraq could prove to be the training ground for the next wave of domestic Indonesian bombers, a Jakarta-based terrorism expert says.

Sidney Jones's comments come as a local documentary seeks to stem the flow of Indonesians heading to Syria, by sharing one former IS recruit's disappointment of working for the group. According to Ms Jones, who is the Head of the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, hundreds of Indonesians are known to have already answered the call of IS.



"I think we are looking at, maybe 250," she said. She said that posed a major threat to Indonesia, as the country's domestic terrorist movement could see a revitalisation upon their return.

"If people did come back with combat experience — the credentials of having fought in Syria and Iraq, renewed ideological equipment, more knowledge about weapon and bomb making and so on — they could revitalise a not very impressive terrorist movement in Indonesia."

In a disturbing development, Ms Jones said IS was not just looking to young men for recruitment. In fact, its propaganda also targets families.

"[IS] has the added attraction of being a pure Islamic state — a great Islamic experiment that they have the opportunity to take part in and that's one of the reasons you see families going," she said. "That's a real pull factor."



Ankara bombing: Who is behind Turkey's deadliest attack?

Source <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34504326>



Saturday's twin bombing in Ankara has widened divisions in an already deeply polarised country.

Turkey's Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has singled out the Islamic State (IS) group as the prime suspect, despite earlier saying that three other banned organisations could be responsible. Meanwhile, opposition HDP party leader Selahattin Demirtas has said the government has "blood on its hands". The BBC assesses the claims.

Islamic State

The Haberturk newspaper reported police sources as saying the type of explosive and the choice of target pointed to a group within Islamic State, known as the 'Adiyaman ones' - referring to Adiyaman province in south-eastern Turkey.

If IS does prove to be responsible, it may have achieved two goals in one strike.

One aim will have been to hurt the Kurds, as Kurdish forces are fighting IS in both Syria and Iraq.

The other goal will have been to hurt the Turkish government, which recently agreed to let US fighter aircraft use its strategically-located Incirlik airbase to launch bombing raids on IS territory in Syria and Iraq.





Turkey, which has also launched its own strikes on IS, is reported to have tightened control over its border with Syria, making it harder for IS fighters to cross. It has also arrested hundreds of IS sympathisers on its own soil.

There has been no claim of responsibility by IS, although a social media account known to be sympathetic to the group was quick to praise the bombings.

However, IS also did not claim responsibility for a deadly bombing near the Syrian border in July - though the Turkish authorities later blamed it on the group.

The PKK launched an armed struggle against the Turkish government in 1984, but called a ceasefire in 2013, with its jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan urging his forces to withdraw from Turkey.

However, the ceasefire broke down after the Suruc bombing, with the PKK blaming security services for failing to prevent the attack.

It has since launched a wave of deadly attacks on Turkish security forces, while the Turkish military has pounded PKK positions in both



The attack in Suruc killed more than 30 youth activists who were discussing rebuilding the neighbouring Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane. A 20-year-old Turkish citizen, an ethnic Kurd from Adiyaman who reportedly had links to IS, was identified as the suspect.

Turkey has been accused of tacit support for IS, viewing it as a useful counterbalance to Kurdish ambitions in the region.

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)

Speaking in the immediate aftermath of the Ankara bombing, Mr Davutoglu named the PKK among four organisations that he said had the capacity to mount such an attack.

Some Turkish MPs were quick to point the finger, arguing that whichever group stood to gain the most from the bombing was likely to have perpetrated it.

However, many observers say the group would be unlikely to bomb a rally attended by many supporters of the pro-Kurdish HDP party.

Turkey and northern Iraq.

On Saturday, the PKK announced a new ceasefire to show respect for the victims of the Ankara attacks. But a Turkish security official told the Reuters news agency that military operations against the group would continue.

More than 40,000 people have died since the PKK launched its armed uprising more than 30 years ago.

'Leftist' organisations

Mr Davutoglu also named two militant left-wing organisations as possible suspects - the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) and the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP).

However, as with the PKK, some observers question whether these groups would target a demonstration that drew in mainly left-wing supporters.



Although neither group has a history of carrying out such large-scale bombings, both have launched attacks in the past, with the DHKP-C targeting US diplomatic missions.

In August, the DHKP-C claimed its members were behind an attack on the US Consulate General in Istanbul. The group previously claimed a 2013 suicide attack on the US embassy in Ankara.

Its members were reportedly among those arrested in a crackdown on suspected IS sympathisers.

The MLKP is a smaller organisation that has been sending volunteers to fight with Kurdish forces in Syria. It claimed responsibility for a 2004 bomb attack on a bus in Istanbul that killed three people ahead of a NATO summit in the city.

The 'deep state'

Selahattin Demirtas, the leader of the pro-Kurdish HDP party, said the government had "blood on its hands" after the Ankara bombing. He accused the government of not fully investigating the Suruc bombing or another attack on an HDP election rally in June.

The fact that no police officers appear to have been injured, as well as HDP claims that police

officers attacked people carrying the injured to safety, have sparked big debate, according to BBC Turkish reporters.

Suspicions that shadowy nationalist "deep state" organisations could be involved have been further raised by the proximity of parliamentary elections in November, the BBC's Mark Lowen in Ankara says.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hopes the AKP party he founded will regain the overall majority it had held since 2002 but lost during elections in June.

Mr Erdogan's opponents accuse him of seeking to polarise Turkish society by stoking the conflict with the PKK and creating an atmosphere of chaos to scare voters into backing his party's security-focused platform.

A renewed AKP majority would also enable Erdogan to gather more powers for his presidency.

However, the Ankara bombing has also led to accusations of an intelligence and security failure.

The head of Turkey's Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), Devlet Bahçeli, said the country was paying the price for a "sympathetic and warm approach to terror and a biased and non-national approach in foreign policy".

How Syria is becoming a test bed for high-tech weapons of electronic warfare

By David Stupples

Source: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20151012-how-syria-is-becoming-a-test-bed-for-high-tech-weapons-of-electronic-warfare?page=0,1>

Oct 12 – The relationship between Russia and the West is becoming increasingly dangerous with potential flashpoints developing in both Eastern Europe and Syria. After repeated incursions into Turkish airspace by Russian warplanes on bombing raids over Syria, NATO's secretary general Jens Stoltenberg warned Moscow that it stands ready to "defend all allies." Meanwhile Britain announced it would send troops to Baltic States to defend NATO's eastern boundaries against possible Russian aggression beyond Ukraine.

Russia's military presence in Syria has been steadily increasing over the past few months. Its warplanes are carrying out regular bombing raids against both Islamic State position and, reportedly, other rebel groups opposed to the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Its warships are launching cruise missiles against the same

targets. But the latest reports are that **Russia has also deployed its most modern electronic warfare system to Syria — the Krasukha-4 (or Belladonna) mobile electronic warfare (EW) unit.**

The Krasukha-4 is a broad-band multifunctional jamming system designed to neutralize Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) spy satellites such as the U.S. Lacrosse/Onyx series, airborne surveillance radars and radar-guided ordnance at ranges between 150km to 300km. The system is reported to be able to cause damage to the enemy's EW systems and communications. **The Krasukha-4 system works by creating powerful jamming at the fundamental radar frequencies and other radio-emitting sources.**



Lt. General Ben Hodges, the commander of U.S. Army Forces Europe, commented that Russia had demonstrated a high level of offensive EW proficiency against Ukrainian forces in Donbas using a first foreign deployment of the Krasukha-4 system.

surveillance satellites (Lacrosse/Onyx series), reconnaissance aircraft (NATO E3 Sentry [AWACS], USAF RC135-Rivet Joint, RAF's Sentinel R1 and Reaper drones), and sharing intelligence information with the side being supported in the conflict.

Since the land grab by the self-proclaimed



Hi tech hostilities

Electronic warfare (EW) was first developed in the Second World War by the United Kingdom to defend against Axis bomber attacks and to defend Allied bombers from enemy surveillance systems. From that time there have been major technological breakthroughs and EW is now acknowledged to be a major fighting element of armed forces worldwide. The United States, Russia, and Europe invest billions of dollars each year in research and development in order to be the best at this essential military art, while Asian countries, led by China, also view EW as a vital area for research and development.

EW is considered to include electronic attack/support, electronic intelligence and signals intelligence. In conflicts since the Second World War, EW has played an increasingly important role in major including Korea, Vietnam, Arab/Israeli, Balkans, Desert Storm/Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. EW is effectively employed before the hard fighting begins to deny an opponent intelligence and the use of weapon systems. Since the beginning of the Arab Spring, NATO countries led by the United States and directly supported by the United Kingdom have been actively gathering intelligence from countries employing **EW assets including low-orbit**

Islamic State (IS) in both Iraq and Syria, NATO's EW assets have been targeting IS



rebel fighting units, gathering intelligence to provide tactical target information and to actively engage IS by denying rebel units radio communication and surveillance information — thus electronically blinding them. Sanitized intelligence information is shared with friendly forces including the rebel forces opposed to Syrian president Bashar al-Assad. Until September 2015, Russia has been supporting Assad by supplying arms and training to Syrian forces. Bolstered by what it sees as Western indecisiveness on a Syria solution and by the West's inaction on Russia's military intervention in the Ukraine, Russia has decided to provide direct military air support to Syria.



However, Assad's enemies comprise all rebel groups opposing his rule — not just IS.

Russia is aware that NATO surveillance assets are able to monitor all Syrian-based Russian military aircraft activity including the rebel groups it is targeting, locations and weapons used. Some of these rebel groups are directly supported by the United States and its allies which may result in Russia becoming in direct political conflict with NATO. To avoid being spied on, Russia needs to blind the eyes and silence the ears of NATO reconnaissance and intelligence-gathering assets so its actions are not open to close scrutiny.

Cat and mouse conflict

So how can the Krasukha-4 be used to cloak Russia's operations in Syria? In words — partially effectively. Its surveillance systems will not only be able to monitor NATO aircraft movement over Syria but also the types, and from its intelligence it will know the frequencies used and signal characteristics present — Lacrosse satellites and AWACS operate in S-band, Sentinel (and similar) in X-band, and drones in J-band. Lacrosse/Onyx satellite positions are continually tracked by Russia. With this intelligence detail the Krasukha-4 can be programmed to engage in order to deny or disrupt NATO intelligence gathering.

But it is not all one way — U.S. and NATO intelligence gatherers will have “electronic counter countermeasures” (ECCM) to combat Russian EW interference — and so the cat and

mouse game of the cold war is repeated. Intelligence gathering and radar-guided munitions will suffer some disruption and mistakes may be made but operations will continue.

ECCM may include being frequency agile and dodging the jamming signal or pointing the receive antenna away slightly from the jamming source. There are also many tricks that can be played with signal processing that will mitigate the effects of jamming. Of course, it would also be possible for NATO to jam the Russian surveillance radar, denying them of identification and positioning of NATO aircraft — but this would really ramp up the war of words with Vladimir Putin. We must also accept that the Krasukha-4 EW system is an essential part of the defense of Russian forces at the Latakia airfield in Syria and this must not be denied them.

Russian military has long appreciated that “radio-electronic combat” is integral to modern warfare and accordingly that it offers a set of relatively inexpensive weapons that can potentially cripple an opponent's ability to sense, communicate and exercise command and control within a battlespace.

Russia will now be able to test its new EW systems in live combat but avoiding direct conflict with NATO — it will enhance overseas sales prospects of the Krasukha-4 system. NATO will be able test its ECCM against another EW system, presumably with similar ends in mind.

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David Stupples is Professor of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Director of Electronic Warfare, City University London.

Isis Inc: how oil fuels the jihadi terrorists

Source: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/b8234932-719b-11e5-ad6d-f4ed76f0900a.html#axzz3oc6Kc0QI>

On the outskirts of al-Omar oilfield in eastern Syria, with warplanes flying overhead, a line of trucks stretches for 6km. Some drivers wait for a month to fill up with crude.



Falafel stalls and tea shops have sprung up to cater to the drivers, such is the demand for oil. Traders sometimes leave their trucks unguarded for weeks, waiting for their turn.

This is the land of Isis, the jihadi organisation in control of swaths of Syrian and Iraqi territory. The trade in oil has been declared a prime target by the international military

coalition fighting the group. And yet it goes on, undisturbed.



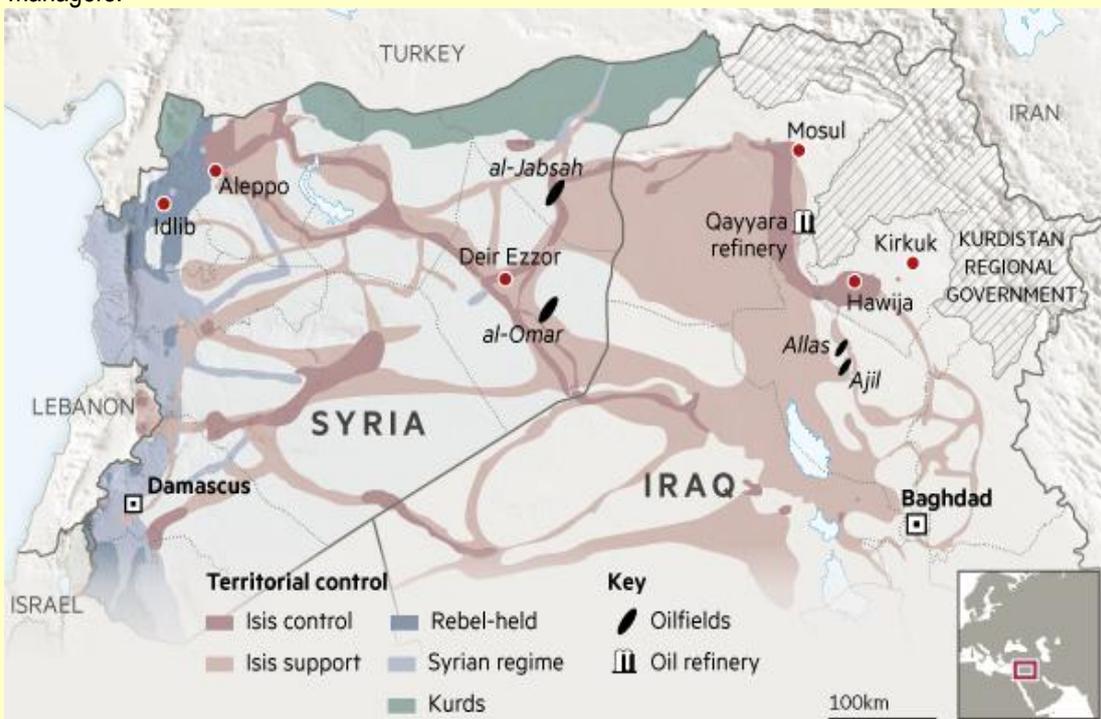
Oil is the black gold that funds Isis' black flag — it fuels its war machine, provides electricity and gives the fanatical jihadis critical leverage against their neighbours.

But more than a year after US President Barack Obama launched an international coalition to fight Isis, the bustling trade at al-Omar and at least eight other fields has come to symbolise the dilemma the campaign faces: how to bring down the “caliphate” without destabilising the life of the estimated 10m civilians in areas under Isis control, and punishing the west’s allies?

The resilience of Isis, and the weakness of the US-led campaign, have given Russia a pretext to launch its own, bold intervention in Syria.

Despite all these efforts, dozens of interviews with Syrian traders and oil engineers as well as western intelligence officials and oil experts reveal a sprawling operation almost akin to a state oil company that has grown in size and expertise despite international attempts to destroy it.

Minutely managed, Isis’ oil company actively recruits skilled workers, from engineers to trainers and managers.



Estimates by local traders and engineers put crude production in Isis-held territory at about 34,000-40,000 bpd. The oil is sold at the wellhead for between \$20 and \$45 a barrel, earning the militants an average of \$1.5m a day.

“It’s a situation that makes you laugh and cry,” said one Syrian rebel commander in Aleppo, who buys diesel from Isis areas even as his forces fight the group on the front lines. “But we have no other choice, and we are a poor man’s revolution. Is anyone else offering to give us fuel?”

Oil as a strategic weapon

Isis’ oil strategy has been long in the making. Since the group emerged on the scene in Syria in 2013, long before they reached Mosul in Iraq, the jihadis saw oil as a crutch for their vision for an Islamic state. The group’s shura council identified it as fundamental for the survival of the insurgency and, more importantly, to finance their ambition to create a caliphate.

Follow the progress of a barrel of oil from extraction to end user to see how the Isis production system works, who is making

money from it, and why it is proving so challenging to disrupt

Most of the oil Isis controls is in Syria’s oil-rich east, where it created a foothold in 2013, shortly after withdrawing from the north-west — an area of strategic importance but with no oil. These bridgeheads were then used to consolidate control over the whole of eastern Syria after the fall of Mosul in 2014.

When it pushed through northern Iraq and took over Mosul, Isis also seized the Ajil and Allas fields in



north-eastern Iraq's Kirkuk province. The very day of its takeover, locals say, militants secured the fields and engineers were sent in to begin operations and ship the oil to market. "They were ready, they had people there in charge of the financial side, they had technicians that adjusted the filling and storage process," said a local sheikh from the town of Hawija, near Kirkuk. "They brought hundreds of trucks in from Kirkuk and Mosul and they started to extract the oil and export it." An average of 150 trucks, he added, were filled daily, with each containing about \$10,000-



worth of oil. Isis lost the fields to the Iraqi army in April but made an estimated \$450m from them in the 10 months it controlled the area. While al-Qaeda, the global terrorist network, depended on donations from wealthy foreign sponsors, Isis has derived its financial strength from its status as monopoly producer of an essential commodity consumed in vast quantities throughout the area it controls. Even without being able to export, it can thrive because it has a huge captive market in Syria and Iraq.

Indeed, diesel and petrol produced in Isis areas are not only consumed in territory the group controls but in areas that are technically at war with it, such as Syria's rebel-held north: the region is dependent on the jihadis' fuel for its survival. Hospitals, shops, tractors and machinery used to pull victims out of rubble run on generators that are powered by Isis oil. "At any moment, the diesel can be cut. No diesel — Isis knows our life is completely dead," says one oil trader who comes from rebel-held Aleppo each week to buy fuel and spoke to the Financial Times by telephone.

A national oil company

Isis' strategy has rested on projecting the image of a state in the making, and it is attempting to run its oil industry by mimicking the ways of national oil corporations. According

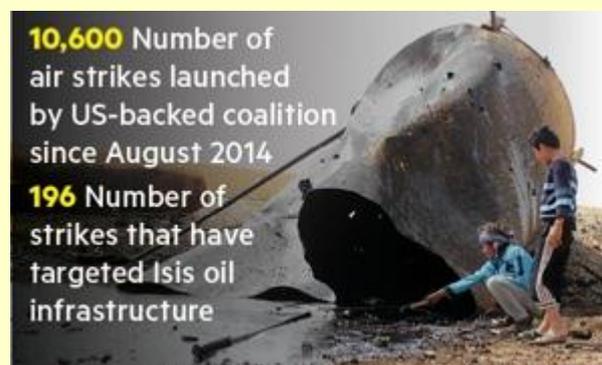
to Syrians who say Isis tried to recruit them, the group headhunts engineers, offering competitive salaries to those with the requisite experience, and encourages prospective employees to apply to its human resources department.

A roving committee of its specialists checks up on fields, monitors production and interviews workers about operations. It also appoints Isis members who have worked at oil companies in Saudi Arabia or elsewhere in the Middle East as "emirs", or princes, to run its most important facilities, say traders who buy Isis oil and engineers who have worked at Isis-controlled fields.

Some technicians have been actively courted by Isis recruiters. Rami — not his real name — used to work in oil in Syria's Deir Ezzor province before becoming a rebel commander. He was later contacted by an Isis military emir in Iraq via WhatsApp.

"I could choose whatever position I wanted, he promised me," he said. "He said: 'You can name your salary'." Sceptical of the Isis project, Rami ultimately turned down the offer and fled to Turkey.

Isis also recruits from among its supporters abroad. In the speech he gave after the fall of Mosul, Isis leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called



not only for fighters but engineers, doctors and other skilled labour. The group recently appointed an Egyptian engineer who used to live in Sweden as the new manager of its Qayyara refinery in northern Iraq, according to an Iraqi petroleum engineer from Mosul, who declined to be named.

The central role of oil is also reflected in the status it is given in Isis' power structures.

The group's approach to government across the territories it controls is highly decentralised. For the most part, it relies on regional *walis* — governors — to

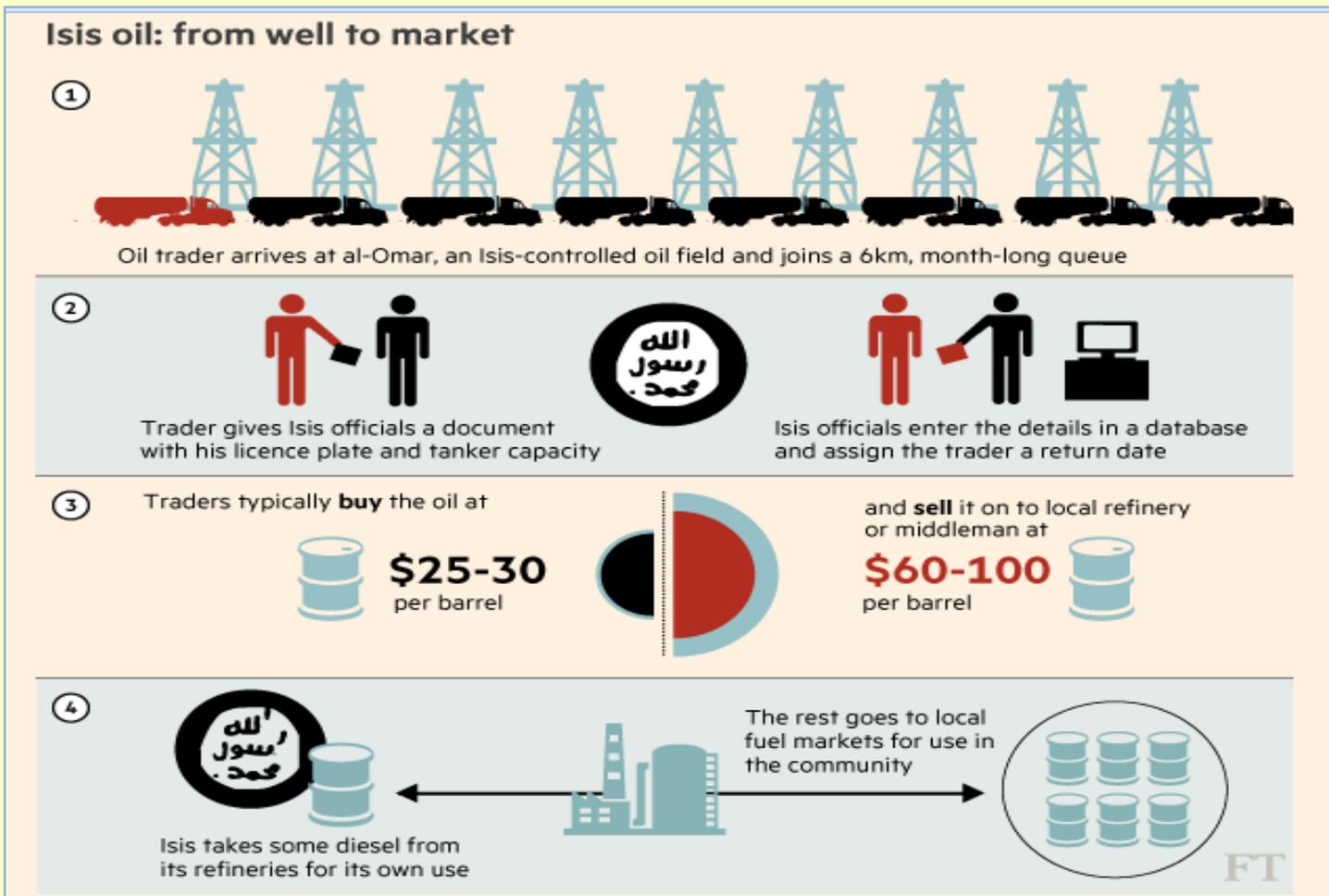


administer territories according to the precepts laid down by the central shura. However, oil — alongside Isis’ military and security operations and its sophisticated media



output — is centrally controlled by the top leadership. “They are organised in their approach to oil,” said a senior western intelligence official. “That’s a key centrally

al-Tunisi, and who was killed by US special forces in a raid in May this year. According to US and European intelligence officials, a treasure trove of documentation relating to Isis’ oil operations was found with him. The documents laid bare a meticulously run operation, with revenues from wells and costs carefully accounted for. They showed a pragmatic approach to pricing too, with Isis carefully exploiting differences in demand across its territories to maximise profitability. Oversight of the oil wells is carefully controlled by the *Amniyat*, Isis’ secret police, who ensure revenues go where they should — and mete out brutal punishments when they do not. Guards patrol the perimeter of pumping stations, while far-flung individual wells are surrounded by protective sand berms and each trader is carefully checked as he



controlled and documented area. It’s a central shura matter,” he added, referring to Isis’ ruling “cabinet”. Until recently, Isis’ emir for oil was Abu Sayyaf, a Tunisian whose real name, according to the Pentagon, was Fathi Ben Awn Ben Jildi Murad

drives in to fill up. At the al-Jibssa field in Hassakeh province, north-eastern Syria, which produces 2,500-3,000 bpd, “about 30-40 big trucks a day, each with 75 barrels of capacity,



would fill up”, according to one Hassakeh oil trader.

Isis' distribution network

But the biggest draw is al-Omar. According to one trader who regularly buys oil there, the system, with its 6km queue, is slow but market players have adapted to it. Drivers present a document with their licence plate number and tanker capacity to Isis officials, who enter them into a database and assign them a number.

Most then return to their villages, shuttling back to the site every two or three days to check up on their vehicles. Traders say that towards the end of the month, some people come back and set up tents to stay close to their trucks while they wait their turn.

Once in possession of al-Omar's oil, the traders either take it to local refineries or sell it

on at a mark-up to middlemen with smaller vehicles who transport it to cities further west such as Aleppo and Idlib.

Isis' luck with oil may not last. Coalition bombs, the Russian intervention and low oil prices could put pressure on revenues. The biggest threat to Isis' production so far, however, has been the depletion of Syria's ageing oilfields. It does not have the technology of major foreign companies to counteract what locals describe as a slow drop in production. Isis' need for fuel for its military operations means there is also less oil to sell in the market.

For now, though, in Isis-controlled territory, the jihadis control the supply and there is no shortage of demand. "Everyone here needs diesel: for water, for farming, for hospitals, for offices. If diesel is cut off, there is no life here," says a businessman who works near Aleppo. "Isis knows this [oil] is a winning card."

US Lacks Strategy To Prevent Citizens From Traveling To Syria, Iraq

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2015/10/report-us-lacks-strategy-to-prevent-citizens-from-traveling-to-syria-iraq/>



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Oct 13 – The House Homeland Security Committee's bipartisan Foreign Fighter Task Force released its final report stating that Washington lacks a strategy to prevent Americans from traveling to Syria and Iraq in order to join the terror organization known as ISIS. The committee states that in the past four years almost 30,000 foreign fighters have joined ISIS' ranks.

The US has already taken several steps to prevent recruitment of foreign fighters. Last July the US has killed an ISIS high ranked fighter in an air strike in northern Syria who was in charge of transferring fighters and weapons from Libya to Syria. According to the



Pentagon, his death was supposed to hurt the organization's ability to recruit foreign fighters. The US also launched the Sawab center – a joint initiative between the US government and the United Arab Emirates. The center was designed to operate online against ISIS propaganda and the recruitment of foreign fighters and donations.

The writers of the report, who researched the subject for six months in order to evaluate the threat and to detect security breaches, state that despite efforts to stop citizens from recruiting, the US has failed to stop many from joining the battles in Syria and Iraq. The US is therefore in danger of them returning to the country with terror attacks in mind. More importantly, the report adds that the US has no national strategy to answer this threat as it hasn't created such strategy for close to a decade.

The dangers arising from these foreign fighters are several. On the one hand, some may return to their own countries and plan terror attack from within, and on the other hand, some prefer to stay where the battles are, thus becoming more extreme and influence others, mainly through the internet. In light of these findings, the world leaders must double their efforts in fighting this phenomenon, by expanding cooperation between the US and its allies in sharing information, increasing the community's awareness to the dangers and strengthening intelligence means.

ISIS Inspires Rather Than Attacks, Study Shows

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2015/10/isis-inspires-rather-than-attacks-study-shows/>



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Oct 09 – The growing threat of ISIS is not stemming from the extremists themselves, but from the terror group's propaganda machine.

The boastful jihadi group has neither the logistics nor the resources to mastermind atrocities in other countries, but is inspiring growing numbers of youths unaffiliated to the group to attempt 'lone wolf' gun attacks.

Terror experts revealed the weakened cult is now relying on radicalised Westerners to do its dirty work after infecting their minds with its hate-filled ideology online.

A new report has found ISIS-inspired plots are on the rise even though the Islamist fanatics behind three quarters of them have never had any direct contact with the group's fighters. In fact, of all the terrorist atrocities attempted worldwide in the last year ISIS itself was only involved in the planning of only one.

Terror experts said the findings underline the huge importance of ISIS' online propaganda campaign, which targets disaffected muslims in western nations.

The police have uncovered 32 ISIS-inspired terror plots in 10 countries since the group declared its so-called Caliphate in July 2014. They involved 58 individuals of 13 different nationalities, but crucially only 16 per cent of those people were directly encouraged to take action by ISIS fighters.



An overwhelming 97 per cent of would-be jihadis are men, according to the report, with three quarters of those under 25 and a shocking 17 per cent teenagers.

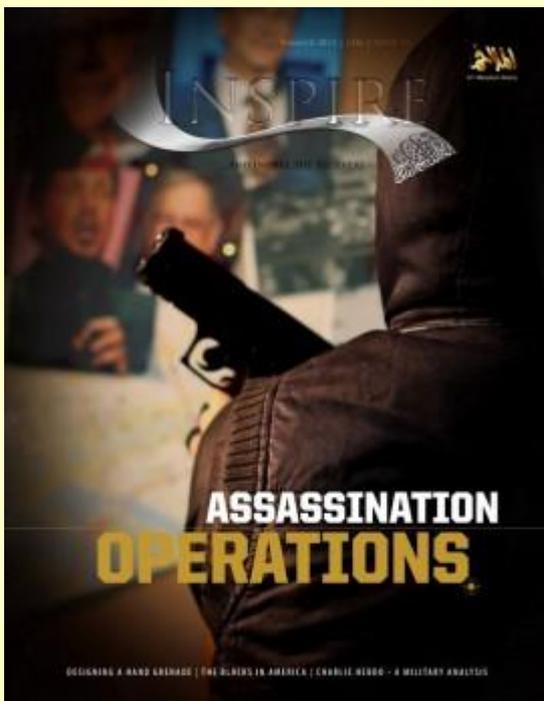
Almost a third of those rumbled plotting terrorist atrocities were recent converts to Islam, whilst more than a fifth were already known to the authorities when they were arrested.

The findings were published in a ground-breaking report titled 'We Will Conquer Your Rome: A Study of Islamic State Terror Plots in the West'.

New AQAP Inspire Magazine Encourages Lone Wolf Attacks

Source: <http://blog.adl.org/extremism/new-aqap-inspire-magazine-encourages-lone-wolf-attacks>

The 14th issue of [Inspire](#), Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)'s English language magazine, released on September 9 to coin-



cide with the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, incites Americans and others living in the West to perpetrate lone-wolf attacks. "We at Inspire, and in the cause of the events of 9/11 encourage the Muslims in the West to join the Lone Jihad caravan," reads the Editor's Letter at the start of the magazine, "the caravan that has and always will continue to trouble and bring nightmares to the west (sic)."

As in previous issues of *Inspire*, the magazine uses anti-Semitism to mobilize the anger and support needed to encourage individuals to sustain AQAP and perpetrate attacks. ADL recently published a [new report on anti-Semitism in Islamic extremist propaganda](#).

One article in the new issue states that the 9/11 attack "in context [was] a general defense on our *Ummah* [Muslim community], that has been assaulted by the Jews and supported by

America." Similarly, another article stated that terrorism "give[s] joy and happiness to...all those hurt by America, bearer of evil, oppression and the protector of the Jews."

A third article, titled "The Corner," focused on anti-Israel sentiments as a means to rile anger against the U.S. The article began by stating that, "Tracking AIPAC annual events, one gets a sense of a spiritual bond between America and Israel." It went on to claim that "In all AIPAC meetings, America's tone towards Israel has been of blind support. Reassuring the Jews that whatever it takes or whatever crime they commit, America will always back them." Rehashing claims made in an August [AQAP video that called for attacks on the U.S.](#), one article says that "There is no stronger evidence than the issue of the Holocaust in which there is no room for freedom of expression or ideas," implying that if Western free speech allows for criticism of Islam, the West must also encourage delegitimization of the Holocaust to avoid hypocrisy.

This issue of *Inspire* also attempted to harness popular anger about injustices against African Americans in the U.S., equating "American oppression towards the Blacks today" to "oppression...exercised against the Muslims today." The article calls on African Americans to "review your actions and to take a stand against these crimes" by condemning the actions of the U.S. and the State of Israel and then suggests that they, too, commit acts of terrorism as described in the magazine: "we at Inspire bring to you military consultation, one may refer back to the previous issues to find appropriate military ideas."

During the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, terror supporters (and particularly supporters of ISIS, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) regularly shared statements online attempting to capitalize on the unrest and promote their version of Islam as better than and more



equality than American democracy. There is no reason to believe that members of the African American community or others sympathetic to the injustices in the U.S. criminal system took those messages seriously, as there is no reason to believe they will take these messages from AQAP seriously.

Other articles and graphics in the magazine praise the 9/11 attacks, the Boston Marathon bombing and the Charlie Hebdo attack.

Inspire has been particularly notorious for its provision of bomb-making instructions. The 14th issue provides directions for building homemade pipe-bombs to be used in assassination attempts. Specifically, the magazine advises targeting economically influential Americans including Ben Shalom Barnanek

(sic), Robert James Shiller, Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, Larry Joseph, Charlie and David Koch, Sam Walton, Sheldon Adelson, and Michael Bloomberg. As if issuing a ransom note, the article suggests that "whosoever wants to secure himself and wealth" should remove their money from U.S. banks, invest their wealth outside U.S. soil and "declare via media that they are far from American policies towards Muslim (sic) and America's support for Israel.

Inspire is perhaps the most notorious Al Qaeda propaganda vehicle. It has played a role in the radicalization of multiple domestic extremists, including the Tsarnaev brothers of the Boston Marathon bombing), Jose Pimentel, who attempted a bombing in New York, and Abdel Daoud, who attempted a bombing in Chicago.

What the Stabbings in Israel Reveal about Palestinian Society

By Alexander H. Joffe

Source: <http://www.meforum.org/5564/palestinian-stabbings>

Oct 15 – **Do cultures have personalities, meaningful collections of attitudes and behaviors? If so, what does the ongoing wave of stabbings of Israelis—elderly passersby, strangers on buses, boys on bikes, infants in carriages—say about Palestinian culture? Who are they, really?**

One suggestion is that Palestinian culture has been overtaken by psychosis. But what is the underlying cause of this flight to unreality? Part of the answer is sadomasochism.

All cultures have a touch of sadism. Political success requires defeating and humiliating enemies in battle, if only occasionally. Individuals capable of or prone to committing terrible pain upon others are found everywhere. And all societies endorse a degree of institutional sadism—police, prisons, military—as part of their monopoly on violence. But for most, pain is only a means to an end, political success and cultural survival, which are the true pleasures.

But inflicting pain and rejoicing in suffering are so visible within Palestinian culture that they can be construed as defining traits. Israelis being murdered, kidnapped, or even just rocketed are causes to hand out sweets to strangers in the street, to publicly affirm—and to invite others to affirm—pleasure in the suffering of others. This is a cultural psychology of objectification and

dehumanization. But to characterize it merely as the result of pervasive incitement is inadequate.

Sadism of course is hardly restricted to Palestinian culture. Native American tribes routinely tortured and killed their captives for sport. Torture is rife in Afghan and Pakistani society, as well as in Mexico and Central America. ISIS broadcasts its beheadings, crucifixions and mass killings as messages to their enemies and to display religious devotion and resolve.

European and North American cultures are hardly virtuous—recall Abu Ghraib, not to mention Auschwitz—but today sadism is the individual exception rather than the societal rule. Systematizing it in culture is anathema. With the exception of warfare, elites that set trends and values, religious authorities, educators, media and politicians, never endorse sadism.

The leaders of Palestinian culture do. As Gaza's Sheikh Muhammad Sallah put it, "My brother in the West Bank: Stab! My brother is the West Bank: Stab the myths of the Talmud in their minds! My brother in the West Bank: Stab the myths about the temple in their hearts!" This merely operationalized Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas' dehumanizing call to arms: "Al-Aksa is ours and so is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



They have no right to desecrate them with their filthy feet. We won't allow them to do so and we will do whatever we can to defend Jerusalem." To these we may add generations of Fatah newspapers, Hamas summer camps, Friday sermons, children's TV characters like Nahoul the bee, and much more.

Individual Palestinians, of course, are disgusted by kidnapping and murder, by rocket attacks, and by the inevitable retaliation. But few speak out for fear of ostracism and violence. Palestinian culture as a whole rejects empathy with Israelis as deviance.

Why the inability to feel a human connection with Jews and Israelis? One explanation is that their experience at the hands of Israelis is so uniquely terrible that however Palestinians respond is logical and virtuous. In this narrative dispossession and 'occupation' legitimize Palestinian violence, which is not really violence at all but 'legitimate resistance' by victims par excellence.

But the fetish of 'resistance' and victimhood leads to another notable Palestinian cultural trait, masochism. The ideology of steadfastness and resistance has long celebrated Palestinian ability to endure pain, much of which it creates itself.

Decades of theatrical – and individual – violence necessarily and by design provoked Israeli responses. At every step potential gains were secondary to inflicting real and psychological pain on Israeli civilians and the political-cultural goal of 'publicizing the Palestinian cause.' Israeli counterattacks were used to rally support, quash peaceful voices, and cement the reign of the PLO and then Hamas. Retaliation was demanded and then revealed in, amidst blood and ashes, reinforcing the self-perception of Palestinian victimhood.

The goal of Hamas's rocket campaign of 2014 was sadistic, random destruction, but the construction of an entire battlespace within and below Gaza's civilian population was deeply masochistic. Tunnels connected homes, clinics and schools in order to be tactically useful for fighting and strategically useful when destroyed. The population was not merely a human shield for Hamas, but a line of defense that Hamas knew would be destroyed. When tunnel entrances are behind someone's kitchen sink, to what extent were Gaza's civilians also aware of Hamas's strategy? They became, willingly and not, human sandbags.

Conventional terrorism has a group context that rationalizes violence and states "we are the resistance." Today's interpersonal violence manifests culture at the individual level, where sadism and masochism are no longer political but supremely personal. They appear unmoored from notions of cause and effect that motivate political violence like hostage-taking or even bombings, designed to provoke fear and specific actions like freeing prisoners.

Masochism has effects beyond dead civilians and the desired international condemnation. It demands that Palestinian society be dragged by the violence of the street, by factions and "rogue cells," whose unauthorized and untimely violence must be endorsed lest resistance be 'betrayed.' The deepest 'cycle of violence' is the individual who invites punishment for the whole, which must then be endorsed and endured.

The masochism of the current stabbing campaign is apparent, since any rational analysis based on experience would conclude that Israelis will suffer but Palestinians will ultimately suffer more. But against this is something else, captured neatly in Hamas' preaching "Killing Jews is worship that draws us close to Allah." Here is a religious appeal to a higher reality that cannot be refuted by logic or experience. Masochism is an avenue to salvation, transforming murderers into heavenly beings.

Why a culture of sadism and masochism? Some of the answer is the experience of the Palestinians across the past 100 or 150 years with the Turks, British, and Jews. But it is also the mutually reinforcing natures of patriarchal, theocratic, and authoritarian (PTA) culture and Islamic ideology.

In cultures with nuclear families and not clans, where the individual is the ultimate locus of free will and where politics have no divine sanction, failures—like acts that invite retaliation—are cause to replace leaders, behavior, or ideas.

But PTA cultures have entirely different logic; predictable failures usefully generate adverse conditions that must then be overcome by more of the same. Failure reinforces the existing culture, its leaders, and general resolve. Provocations must be therefore redoubled. Failure is success; adversity has been created and must be surmounted. And proclamations that "My son is an offering to the Al-Aqsa,



congratulations to him on the Martyrdom-death" are ideological keys to the continued cycle of power and suffering.

What is the response to sadomasochism and religion in international affairs? First is to recognize it for what it is, an entirely different set of cultural premises and behaviors, with self-reinforcing logic, that plays off superficial Western images of victims and victimizers.

Second, notions of collective gain, through negotiation or strategies of coercion and

benefits, may apply partially or not at all. Finally, one must take Palestinian leaders at their word and recognize that they are playing a zero sum game in which Israel simply cannot exist.

When suffering is embraced, when one side truly loves death more than life, how can peace be made? What is the price and who is willing to pay? These questions remain unanswered.

Alexander H. Joffe, a Shillman-Ginsburg fellow at the Middle East Forum, is a historian and archaeologist.

Disney hiring intelligence and counter-terrorism intern

Source: <http://www.news965.com/news/news/local/disney-hiring-intelligence-and-counter-terrorism-i/nn4T6/#sthash.JL9TpdTf.dpuf>

In an effort to provide extra security to the Walt Disney World Company, they are now hiring a "Global Intelligence Analyst Intern for the the spring of 2016.

According to the company's website, the perfect candidate would:

- Assist in the collection and production of timely, accurate and relevant intelligence/counter threat assessments, plans, estimates; assists in determining the best options to counter both existing and future threats or emerging technology.
- Specialize focus on regional focus on threats to North America and Transnational issues as assigned
- Use specific regional/language knowledge to support team research projects
- Compose and brief assigned intelligence topics and threats to Global Security leaders

The minimum skills needed are knowledge of MS Office products and ability to use the internet but the company prefers someone with international experience and who has 'second language capabilities.'

The L.A. Times reports that Disney's two big theme parks, Disneyland in California and Walt Disney World in Florida, are officially designated as "national defense airspace," and are listed as strict no-fly zones.

No word yet on how many applications the company has received.



Are Airports As Safe As We Hope?

Source: <http://i-hls.com/2015/10/are-airports-as-safe-as-we-hope/>

When you are traveling abroad, you must think of the long lines to the terminal checkpoints and frown. Most of us, however, immediately remember the significance of these long inspections for our personal safety and for our comfort in knowing the flight to be safe. **Surprisingly enough, covert testing at airports reveals that this sense of security is false.**

According to the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general, these tests airport security checkpoints produced "disappointing and troubling" results. The findings come after a June disclosure of major security failures within the Transportation Security



Administration (TSA)'s screening process that led to the ousting of the agency's acting director.

Investigators who ran tests at eight different airports during an unspecified time attributed screeners' failure to detect anomalies and potential security threats to problems with technology, human error and the TSA's own procedures.

Exact details about the security failures and the airports screened were not disclosed as the information is considered classified.

Newly appointed TSA Administrator Peter Neffenger said that a disproportionate focus on speed and efficiency in screening operations rather than security effectiveness was damaging to security performance across the agency. As part of the changes he has made to security since taking over the agency, Mr. Neffenger said security screeners and management have gotten renewed training that focuses on the specific failures detected in covert tests. The TSA has also put a stop to other tactics used at airport screenings that created "greater risk" to the system, including the practice of randomly allowing people who were not vetted through the TSA Precheck program to go through expedited screening.

Though classified, prior covert security test results were leaked and showed that undercover investigators were able to smuggle mock explosives or banned weapons through checkpoints 95 percent of the time. Investigators also found that 73 people were able to obtain federal approval to work in secure areas at airports despite having unspecified connections to terrorism.

A global sharing of information regarding security risks in airports can lead to better results, such as with sharing lists of wanted persons and terrorists with airports around the world or learning security methods from other countries, who are at the forefront of the field, such as Israel.

