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Table of Contents

Pages

Terrorism in Africa

- Security Threats Facing Africa and Its Capacity to Respond – ANALYSIS	4
Algeria	
- Mohamed Aïssa à Tizi Ouzou : «L’islam authentique rejette l’extrémisme religieux»	15
Egypt	
- L’Egypte confortée dans son rôle-clé contre les jihadistes	16
Libya	
- The United Nations and Libya – Again	19
- ISIS Fighters Take Over Major Libyan Oilfields	31
Mali	
- L’Algerian Mokhtar Belmokhtar Revendiqué la Tuerie de Bamako	33
Nigeria	
- Boko Haram gains new power by aligning with ISIS, say experts	36
- Nigerian elections: what if Buhari wins?	39
- African Training Exercise Turns Urgent as Threats Grow	44
- Boko Haram peut-il devenir l’Etat islamique en Afrique? (ANALYSE)	52
- Allégeance de Boko Haram à l’EI: «un acte de désespoir», selon Abuja	54
- Boko Haram beheading video shows ties to ISIS, say experts	56
Somalia	
- Al-Shabaab releases chilling video about Mpeketoni attack	59
South Sudan	
- Peace talks collapse, election called off	61
Tunisia	
- Tunisie - Libye : une frontière à haut risque	63

Terrorism in the World

Canada

- Canada's government pushes anti-terror measures 66

China

- Understanding Terrorism in China – ANALYSIS 68

Iraq

- Une vidéo de l'EI montre l'exécution d'un arabe israélien par un enfant 71
- «Daech sera battu», affirme Martin Dempsey 75

Italy

- ISIS's Next Crusade: Italy 78

Pakistan

- Analysis: Wrangling persists in listing terror groups 84

Turkey

- Turkey's SCO Perspectives and Economic Aspects – ANALYSIS 87

United Kingdom

- Analysis: 'Jihadi John' won't have the same impact unmasked 92

USA

- The Collapse of Order in the Middle East 95

Terrorism in Africa

SECURITY THREATS FACING AFRICA AND ITS CAPACITY TO RESPOND – ANALYSIS

MARCH 5, 2015



Malian soldier establishes security in a landing site during the multi-national exercise Flintlock.

Africa is currently facing two entirely distinct security threats, one from the rise of radical Islam, the other from increased natural resource extraction. African security forces are ill-equipped to meet these threats. Much of this is deep-rooted, rather than due to deficiencies that could readily be addressed. I first set out each of the new security threats. I then turn to Africa's military capacity, tracing its limitations to underlying motivations. I suggest that the most straightforward way of changing the belief systems that generate motivation is strengthening national identity, but that this has been made more difficult by the divisive force of electoral competition. I conclude that Africa will need three forms of international support.

Threat 1: Radical Islam

Radical Islam is a global phenomenon, generated by the uncontrolled dissemination of extremist ideology, supported by vast private wealth in the Gulf, the use of which is not subject to scrutiny. It poses a distinctive threat to Africa partly because many African countries have substantial Muslim populations that, in conditions of poverty and poor governance, can easily become disaffected.

Additionally, the threat is distinctive because the organizations needed to counter it effectively require a level of sophistication and cost that are beyond the means of most African militaries.

The threat from radical Islam has recently been evident in Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), Kenya and Nigeria. In Mali and CAR it was existential: without timely French military intervention both states would have been overrun and fallen to radical Islamic forces. In Nigeria and Kenya the threat has taken the form of sensational terrorism that, while not threatening the states themselves, is highly damaging to their international reputations. This difference in consequences is primarily due to the greater military capacity of Nigeria and Kenya: both countries have economies that are sufficiently robust to finance militaries with the capacity to defeat feasible rebel challenges. However, their security forces are not adequate for the more demanding task of preventing the escalation of terrorism.

In all four situations the Islamic terrorism is a spill-over from failing neighbouring countries in which Islamic militants have been able to build their military capacity. The meltdown in Libya, which is ongoing, provided a base from which a rebel force could equip itself sufficiently to defeat the Malian army; the endemic insecurity of vast areas of the Sahel enabled a rebel force to defeat the army of CAR and to infiltrate North-East Nigeria; and Islamists in Somalia were able to mount terrorist attacks in Kenya. Geography, more than policy differences, probably accounts for why it is these countries and not others that are facing the worst threats: these countries border on failing states. But there is clearly potential for terrorism to spread.

Threat 2: Natural Resource Discoveries

Although Africa has long been a natural resource exporter, until recently it was only lightly prospected: resource extraction per square mile was much lower than in other regions. The high commodity prices of the past decade have triggered a wave of investment in prospecting and, because Africa was the least explored region, it became the favored location for exploration.

During the past decade many valuable resources have been discovered in previously resource-poor African countries, often in remote areas. During the present decade the mines and transport infrastructure will be developed in order to exploit these discoveries.¹

While natural resources have the potential to finance development, they also have the potential to catalyze violent conflict.² Valuable resources have sometimes been a source of finance for rebel groups, as with diamonds in Angola and Sierra Leone. They have also raised the stakes for capturing power, while reducing the need for accountability to citizens by displacing taxes as the primary source of state revenue: the resulting contamination of politics has long been illustrated by Nigeria. Further, since valuable resources are never evenly spread throughout a territory, they give well-endowed regions an incentive to try to secede from the nation, as with the Katanga region of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Biafra region of Nigeria.

The localized nature of resource discoveries interacts with strong sub-national

identities to create serious security vulnerabilities. The same national and sub-national identities can be entirely compatible in the context of cooperation, but become oppositional once the ownership of valuable resources becomes salient. This is by no means Africa-specific: Scotland is an example. For three centuries being Scottish was not seen as incompatible with being British: for much of this period the most salient activity was the common task of defence against external threat. However, during the past decade of high oil prices, the oil off the shore of Scotland has replaced external security as the most salient issue, leading to strong pressure for secession. Because African sub-national identities are so strong, this interaction of resources and local identity is likely to be particularly troubling in the region. The recent oil discovery in Kenya is located in a remote area whose people, the Turkana, have never been integrated into Kenyan identity. Oil activities soon had to be suspended due to local violence. Even in Tanzania, the discovery of gas offshore of the region of Mtwara led to riots and four deaths because people in the region claimed that it belonged to them, not to the nation. Currently, South Sudan has collapsed into civil war because the oil which is the government's sole source of finance is located in the territory of the Nuer tribe, whereas the government is controlled by the Dinka, their ancestral rivals.

African Military Capacity

The limitations of African militaries in response to these threats have been all too evident. Their weakness in Mali and the CAR was probably inevitable in view of their economic and geographic fundamentals: these territories are basically too poor to impose security on their highly dispersed populations. While retrospectively it is always easy to identify political weaknesses, prior to its collapse Mali was not on any of the three independently maintained lists of fragile states (e.g. by the World Bank, OECD, or the EU3). By African standards, it was one of the better-conducted democracies. Hence, any solution to insecurity in these and similar countries will require a degree of external military assistance. In contrast, the limitations of the military in Nigeria and Kenya are not fundamentally economic. In both countries the military tasks required to respond to terrorist attacks were relatively modest. In Nigeria, 200 schoolgirls were abducted by a small rebel group and taken to a forest area, yet they could not be traced by the Nigerian military. In Kenya, a shopping mall in Nairobi was overrun by terrorists and coastal villages were brutally attacked. When soldiers were called in to the Nairobi shopping mall they took the opportunity to loot the shops rather than stop the carnage; on the coast, following the attack, terrorists were able to repeat the slaughter in a neighboring village. These failings are not, fundamentally, due to an inadequate budget, but to something both deeper and less tractable: motivation.

Conventionally, economics has analyzed motivation in terms of financial incentives linked to monitored performance. However, as argued by Akerlof and Kranton⁴, in many contexts this is not an effective solution. They show that in high-productivity private sector firms the most common solution to the challenge of retaining motivation is that the organization succeeds in getting its workforce to internalize its

objectives. Through internalization, scale and specialization are reconciled with motivation. While internalization rather than financial incentives is the preferred solution in many commercial organizations, it is far more important in public organizations. The nature of the work usually limits the scope for using high-powered financial incentives because individual performance is difficult to monitor, while the objectives of the organization lend themselves to internalization more readily than those of most firms. This is true of the military, par excellence. So, to understand military organizations it is essential to understand the psychological mechanics of internalization.

Directly, internalization is a change in identity: hence the name that Akerlof and Kranton give to their book. The military recruit internalizes the proposition, “I am a good soldier.” This change in identity enhances performance because it implies new norms: a good soldier bravely fights the enemy. What brings about the change in identity is a changed perception of some aspects of how the world works. Psychologists have established that overwhelmingly people acquire their understanding of the world not through analytic expositions but through narratives. The soldier changes his perception because he comes to accept a set of narratives, such as “this army is essential for the peace of the country.” Identities, narratives and norms, which I will term collectively beliefs, are the psychological processes that determine internalization. In turn, beliefs are generated through participation in social networks within which information circulates. In summary, an “effective organization” is a locally stable constellation of identities, narratives, norms and networks that makes the workforce productive by reconciling scale and specialization with motivation.

Most African countries are chronically short of such public organizations: shirking and corruption are debilitating and endemic. Many armies are no more effective than other parts of the public sector. Nevertheless, an army should be the easiest public organization to make effective. All militaries have at their disposal an identity, a narrative and a norm that are functional and compatible, and a network that can be used to deliver them. Indeed, while Akerlof and Kranton take most of their examples from the private sector, their archetypical example of an effective organization, used as the opening illustration in their book, is the U.S. Army. Around the developed world, armies recruit low-skilled teenage males and are able to motivate many of them to risk their lives, a degree of motivation which even investment banks using high-powered incentives to the limit seldom achieve. Globally, the military has the monopoly on the right to promote the narrative that its workers are defending the nation. While particular circumstances can undermine this narrative, in most circumstances it is a powerful one. The narrative supports clear norms of personal courage and sacrifice both for the national interest, and that of the team. Between them, the narrative and norm support the internalization of an identity: “I am a member of a team that defends the nation.”

Not only are the beliefs attractive and reinforcing, the hierarchical, team-based, and hermetic nature of military networks gives military leaders a potent vehicle for

delivering beliefs to the workforce. In contrast, political leaders might lack networks for building motivation in teachers. Whereas soldiers live together in barracks, teachers live in their local communities. Above the level of headmaster, there is little organizational structure whereby Ministries of Education can deliver functional beliefs to teachers: there is little that is national about a typical teacher's experience of the job. The military hierarchy leads all the way up to the Head of State. In consequence, it may be easier for the Head of State to inculcate a common norm of public service among soldiers than among teachers. The easy communication afforded to military leaders by means of the networks they control carries a qualification. If the conduct of leaders is visibly incompatible with the beliefs they promote then the process degenerates into theatre: participants merely perform a role and understand that that is what others are doing.

In summary, it is easier to build functional beliefs through a military network than in either a democratic political party or the civilian parts of the public sector. Although other public sector organizations can invoke narratives of the national interest, none is as potent as that of defending the nation: teenage boys do not dream of being tax inspectors.

Motivation, Nationalism and Democracy: Links and Tensions

Two key building blocks in the belief system that generates and sustains an effective military are nationalism and heroic leadership. The nation is what the military protects, and the nation's leader is visibly self-sacrificing in the national interest. Directly, nationalism provides a shared identity, but it also involves a supporting narrative, typically of a past struggle that has forged the nation, with heroes of that struggle as role models. From this follows the norm of service to protect the nation. Internalization, and the nationalism that facilitates it, are not the only mechanisms for motivation: men fight for their colleagues. But comradeship alone is not enough: lacking a sense of public duty, Kenyan soldiers chose to loot together rather than to fight together.

Most African militaries are ineffective because most African countries lack a strong sense of national identity and their leaders have ostentatiously eschewed self-sacrifice. The contrast between the founding presidents of Kenya and Tanzania demonstrates the long-term consequences. In Kenya, President Jomo Kenyatta behaved like most other African presidents, using his power to favor his own tribe over its rivals. Exceptionally, and in contrast, the Tanzanian president, Julius Nyerere, prioritized building national identity. He introduced a national language, a common school curriculum, and a neutrally sited new capital city, while requiring civil servants to work in regions other than that of their birth. Also exceptionally, Nyerere lived modestly making his narrative of a common national struggle credible, whereas Kenyatta amassed one of the largest fortunes in the world. Forty years later Eduard Miguel compared similar multi-ethnic villages on either side of the border to see whether people could cooperate to maintain a well.⁵ On the Kenyan side of the border people had not learned to cooperate across tribal lines whereas on

the Tanzanian side they had.

When President Nyerere set about building a sense of common Tanzanian identity, he was concerned that multi-party democracy would make the task more difficult. Inevitably, political parties would be organized on the basis of established sub-national, tribal, identities. The rivalry and competition between parties would likely reinforce these identities, overriding his desired new narrative of shared identity based on shared endeavour. His opposition to multi-party politics was not based on a personal calculation of power retention. Elections were held in which the population was given a yes/no choice of whether to re-elect the President, and in 1984, feeling responsible for the failure of his economic policies, he resigned.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union practical international action has promoted, and increasingly insisted, on multi-party electoral competition as the defining feature of the passage to modernity. This policy has not been directed specifically to Africa: its core foci were in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. But aid to Africa gave Western governments the power to insist. An inadvertent consequence is that in most African countries at no stage has there been an environment conducive to building a strong national identity. Politics passed directly from ethnically divisive autocracy to ethnically divisive electoral competition.

The weakness of national identity has made motivation more difficult in all public service organizations. Teachers do not show up for class; nurses steal drugs; tax officials extort bribes rather than raise revenue for government. But arguably, it is the military that is most reliant upon national identity for the vital psychological process of internalization of organizational objectives. In the absence of a sense of shared national identity, teachers may still be motivated by a desire to pass on learning, and nurses by a desire to heal the sick. But without a sense of shared identity it is difficult to see why soldiers would risk their lives.

The most striking exceptions to African public sector weakness are in Ethiopia and Rwanda. Not only have both got effective militaries, but both have very low levels of corruption and have delivered rapid, broad-based economic growth for their citizens. Neither of these political systems is a conventional democracy: while elections are held, neither government would acquiesce in a loss of political power. In consequence, they have been subject to much international criticism. In place of multi-party electoral competition, they have a mass national party: the public officials who administer government functions are members of the party. In turn, the party has emerged out of a successful rebel movement. The conditions necessary for military success were not only military patterns of command, but a set of beliefs – an ideology – in which the key tenets were personal sacrifice for the goal of national liberation and development. This ideology could only be made credible to ordinary rebel fighters if the leadership itself set an example. In both countries leaders and leadership teams lived frugally. Not only was this imperative for the practical military functioning of the rebel organization, once these beliefs had been internalized across the higher cadres of party membership they enabled a wider

range of functions to be performed to an adequate standard once in government. While both rebel organizations were ethnically based and retain a strong ethnic core, their ideology was national rather than ethnic. Consistent with their ideology, in their evolution to mass national parties they have gradually broadened their membership to include other ethnic groups. For example, upon the death of Meles Zenawi in 2012, his replacement as Head of Government was from southern Ethiopia rather than his native Tigray.

The internalized ideology of party cadres has provided an effective, albeit unconventional, form of checks and balances on the use of power. Elsewhere in Africa, alongside electoral competition there is now a conventional suite of checks and balances such as courts and audits. However, while more readily recognizable to the Western eye, they have proved to be easy to circumvent.

Implications for International Policy

For the next decade the security threats from radical Islam and natural resource discoveries are likely to be important issues in Africa. African militaries are mostly in no condition to meet these threats. If my diagnosis is correct, that the underlying problem is the weakness of national identity, this is unlikely to be remedied. On the contrary, localized natural resource discoveries, religious polarization, and multi-party winner-take-all politics played for heightened stakes, may all further tend to weaken national identity.

This prospect has three broad security implications for international policy. One is that in the neighborhoods of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, it might be advisable to strengthen some states that could become neighborhood anchors. A second is that the confidence placed in electoral competition may need to be questioned: some unconventional forms of governance may nevertheless work reasonably well in African conditions. The third is that for several states external military assistance is likely to be necessary. It is, however, important to recognize that each of these has the potential to go badly wrong.

Using international policy to favor countries that are judged to be strategically important can backfire. The favored governments can exaggerate their fortune and relax the necessary focus on delivering services to citizens. Neighboring governments can become resentful, impeding cooperation. Nevertheless, there are currently some situations in Africa where promoting neighborhood bulwarks would be sensible. In Francophone West Africa two countries have recently emerged from fragility and now have considerable potential. Guinea has its best government since independence and is beginning to exploit its vast natural resource wealth. By harnessing this wealth, the country has the opportunity for economic transformation over the next decade. Similarly, Cote d'Ivoire, having emerged from a decade of civil war, now has the opportunity for rapid resource-financed development. In both countries a legacy of conflict has left them short of management capacity across the public sector. International action to strengthen this capacity has been slow to scale up so as to accelerate recovery.

In the Horn of Africa Ethiopia and Kenya are vital bulwarks. Yet the core economic strategy of the Ethiopian government to industrialize on the back of cheap hydro-power has been frustrated by international opposition to dams. This matter should be recognized as a legitimate choice of a legitimate government. Analogously, the Kenyan government is currently facing international pressure to cooperate in the trial of its President and Vice-President at the International Criminal Court in the Hague. While the international desire to end political impunity is commendable, the Kenyan situation is highly peculiar. While the President and Vice-President are accused of having previously sanctioned organized violence against each others' supporters, they are now manifestly reconciled in a political alliance which has been endorsed by citizens through an election. In consequence, the action of the court appears locally as re-enacting colonialism rather than as breaking the cycle of impunity.

A more eclectic approach to African political development risks giving license for the repeat of past political abuses: autocracy, ethnic dominance, and corruption. However, properly done it would shift emphasis from the forms of power acquisition to the substance of how power is being used. Financial integrity and wider ethnic social inclusion would become more important, with a particular focus on the good management of natural resources. Conversely, in those contexts in which these criteria were being met, the right to challenge power would become less important. Manifestly, the task of building national identity cannot be assisted externally. But the current insistence upon multi-party electoral competition in contexts of weak checks and balances on the use of power once won, has created powerfully divisive forces. Ultimately, the most desirable remedy for this situation is much stronger checks and balances. But checks and balances are processes rather than events, and they have proved to be difficult to build in African conditions. In some countries they may require a much longer time horizon than the timetables of radical Islam and resource discoveries are likely to permit. In such contexts a more rapidly achievable outcome might be for ruling parties to be encouraged to evolve into mass organizations with an ideology of national development, ethnic inclusion, and leadership self-sacrifice.

External military assistance has had a terrible decade and the potential for mistakes is evident. However, Africa is a far less demanding security challenge than the Middle East in this regard.

The immediate priorities arise from radical Islam. There is an urgent need for strengthened security in the Sahel, and enhanced intelligence against terrorism, especially in East Africa. Countering the security risks from the growth of natural resource extraction is less immediate but it is also more difficult to achieve a military solution.

The threat from radical Islam in the Sahel requires security cooperation among African countries. The regional hegemons, South Africa and Nigeria, have both recog-

nized this need but neither is strong enough to be able to satisfy it. For example, South Africa had a force in CAR at the time it was overrun, but the force was too small and was rapidly withdrawn after taking casualties. As in the Europe of seventy years ago, cooperation is impeded by a long history of rivalries: Sahelian countries have periodically been at war with each other; Nigeria and South Africa are bitter rivals for the role of leadership, while both are viewed with suspicion by smaller countries. As in Europe, the solution is to catalyze cooperation externally. Either the African Union, or ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), could be the African partner organization. The international partner could be the UN, NATO, or an *ad hoc* consortium of interested parties such as China, the U.S., France, and the UK. The key elements of cooperation would be mutual commitments. The external parties would commit to substantial and sustained financial, logistic, and training support for an African military force, but would eschew troops on the ground.

The African parties would commit to contribute sufficient manpower to a standing force, a genuinely unified command structure, an unambiguous mandate for combat operations, clear rules for when such an engagement would be authorized, and a precisely specified and speedy authorizing mechanism. It might be a decade before an effective force was fully in place. But both Islamic radicalism and natural resource extraction are probably still in their early stages: in a decade the need for containing the associated security problems is likely to have increased.

The need for enhanced counter-terrorism intelligence, especially in East Africa, may be more difficult to meet. Intelligence cannot reasonably be shared with organizations that are too weak to keep it secure. The pervasive corruption of the African public sector therefore precludes substantial sharing. The alternative is to finance and train self-contained intelligence gathering capacity country-by-country.

While the threat from radical Islam is immediate, that from natural resources is likely to build up gradually over the decade. Unfortunately, neither the pan-African force needed for the Sahel, nor enhanced counter-terrorist intelligence would address it. It would be highly problematic to use a pan-African military force to suppress rebellions in resource-rich regions demanding greater autonomy. The commitments would risk being open-ended, and would encourage government intransigence. Cumulatively, such uses would undermine continued international support. The only feasible military counter to resource-based rebellions is to have a strong and effective national army, but building such nation-by-nation military capacity is beyond the power of international actors. The revealed weakness of the Nigerian military was not due to a lack of budget: the Nigerian military commands a budget far higher than could be attained in any other African country. The revealed weakness of the Kenyan military was that its soldiers were less interested in protecting citizens than in shopping: such a deficiency is not amenable to foreign training. It is worth noting that there is nothing specifi-

cally African about these failings: the revealed weaknesses of the Iraqi army, despite external efforts far in excess of anything conceivable for Africa, are informative.

Rather, the most credible solution to the threat posed by the enhanced importance of natural resources is political: better domestic governance of natural resources can reduce the risk of violence. This has several key components: resolving tensions between national and local interests; building trust in the financial integrity of budgets; and managing expectations.

There are two sources of tension between the local and the national: ownership of the revenues and environmental damage. By far the best time to resolve ownership issues is before the resource has been discovered. Sir Seretse Khama, the first president of Botswana, had the foresight to tour the country prior to prospecting for diamonds with the message, "can we agree that anything we find belongs to all of us?" Prior to discovery, brute self-interest is sufficient to get agreement to such a proposition; after discovery, self-interest drags the fortunate locality into indignant assertions of ownership. Environmental damage is necessarily borne locally not nationally. Building systems that ensure speedy and proportionate compensation in remote and weakly governed areas is difficult but essential. The Delta region of Nigeria illustrates the disastrous consequences of early neglect: local populations resorted to violence to force compensation, and this evolved into an extortion racket. Without trust in the financial integrity of budgets, local populations come to believe that their valuable resources are being stolen by distant elites. Since African governments start from a position of deep suspicion among citizens, building trust requires drastic enhancement of practical budget transparency. In the absence of an active policy to manage expectations, the announcement of a valuable resource discovery is liable to trigger wildly exaggerated hopes. Poor people have no familiarity in digesting news expressed in billions of dollars and millions of barrels. Again, the political leadership of Botswana provides a model. Citizens were educated in the need for patience – "we're poor and so we must carry a heavy load." This narrative was operationalized into a policy of using diamond revenues to accumulate assets rather than to finance immediate increases in consumption. Such political wisdom remains rare.

There is a lot that international political action can do to enhance the governance of natural resources. To date, there has been considerable progress in revenue transparency, but there has as yet been little attention to the transparency of expenditure, which is obviously of more concern to citizens. The onus for building effective systems of compensation for environmental damage is on the international companies that extract resources. The management of expectations through a positive narrative of prudent accumulation is beginning: the Norwegian model of a sovereign wealth fund has become fashionable. However, as yet this probably reflects isomorphic mimicry of institutions, rather than a genuine attempt to harness an economic opportunity: alongside sovereign wealth funds,

governments are issuing bonds to finance consumption.

Conclusion

Africa has been through a successful decade of rapid growth. However, it is facing new security threats that are likely to be beyond its current or feasible domestic military capacity. While the threat from the increasing importance of natural resources can best be countered by improved economic governance, that from Islamic extremism probably requires international military assistance, at least to the neighbourhoods of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. In the longer term, African governments will need to improve domestic military effectiveness. However, I have suggested that the current lack of effectiveness is rooted in a more general lack of worker motivation in the public sector. In this case, rectifying it may depend upon resetting the identities, narratives and norms which underpin motivation. Leaders may be able to achieve such a reset through national parties, embodying an ideology of ethnic inclusivity and personal sacrifice, as appears to be underway in Rwanda and Ethiopia. Such a strategy differs considerably from the preferred Western approach of multi-party electoral competition. But in retrospect, the emphasis on the process by which power is acquired, as opposed to how it is used, may have been misplaced.

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<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

Algeria

Mohamed Aïssa à Tizi Ouzou : «L'islam authentique rejette l'extrémisme religieux»

L'islam authentique, cette religion inspirée du Coran et de la Sunna, est basé sur le respect de l'autre, l'amour d'autrui et la tolérance. Il rejette l'extrémisme religieux qui continue à détruire, aujourd'hui, beaucoup de nations. Nous voulons réconcilier les Algériens avec l'islam authentique pour préserver la cohésion sociale et la souveraineté nationale.

Nous n'avons qu'un seul islam, celui pratiqué par nos ancêtres», a déclaré, hier, le ministre des Affaires religieuses et des Wakfs, Mohamed Aïssa, lors d'une visite dans la wilaya de Tizi Ouzou, où il a procédé à l'ouverture officielle des travaux des journées d'étude sur «Le rôle de la confrérie Rahmaniya dans l'ancrage des valeurs islamiques et nationalistes» organisées par la coordination locale des zaouïas à la maison de la culture Mouloud Mammeri.

Le représentant du gouvernement a souligné que les enfants de la région de Kabylie ont réussi à maintenir l'islam ancestral qui est un moyen efficace pour combattre l'extrémisme. «La Kabylie est la région des martyrs et des nationalistes comme elle est aussi une région qui s'est érigée comme rempart contre l'extrémisme», a-t-il ajouté, avant de mettre l'accent sur le travail de la confrérie Rahmaniya, notamment dans la lutte contre le colonialisme français. «La Tariqa Errahmaniya est également une référence incontournable dans le nationalisme.

Les zaouïas sont appelées à jouer leur rôle contre l'extrémisme religieux afin de préserver la souveraineté nationale», a laissé entendre le ministre, qui a précisé, par ailleurs, que l'imam doit donner des conseils comme il doit aussi être un exemple de rectitude. «Les hommes de culte doivent s'inscrire dans la démarche nationale de l'enseignement de l'islam authentique qui rejette la violence», a-t-il insisté.

Hafid Azzouzi

<http://elwatan.com/>

Egypt

L'Egypte confortée dans son rôle-clé contre les jihadistes

14/03/2015



L'Egypte confortée dans son rôle-clé contre les jihadistes

La pluie de milliards promise à l'Egypte par les monarchies du Golfe à l'occasion de la conférence internationale de Charm el-Cheikh conforte le président Abdel Fattah al-Sissi, qui se veut le fer de lance des pays arabes dans la lutte contre les jihadistes.

M. Sissi, qui a destitué en juillet 2013 le président islamiste élu Mohamed Morsi et est accusé par les organisations de défense des droits de l'Homme de réprimer dans le sang toute opposition, est l'un des principaux chefs d'Etat de la région à réclamer la création d'une force arabe commune pour combattre notamment le groupe Etat islamique (EI), une option que va étudier la Ligue arabe lors de son sommet fin mars.

Le sujet est d'une importance fondamentale car la coalition internationale se contente pour l'heure de bombardier l'EI en Irak et en Syrie, et les seules actions au sol sont le fait de l'armée irakienne avec des milices alliées et de forces kurdes en Syrie.

Le chef de la Ligue arabe Nabil al-Arabi a récemment souligné "le besoin pressant d'une force arabe" au moment où l'EI étend son influence en Libye et dans le Si-

naï égyptien, tout en multipliant les atrocités en Irak et en Syrie.

La puissante armée égyptienne pourrait constituer l'épine dorsale d'une force arabe. Fin février, M. Sissi a indiqué que l'Arabie saoudite, les Emirats arabes unis, le Koweït et la Jordanie pourraient s'impliquer dans une telle initiative.

L'Egypte est le plus peuplé et le mieux armé des pays arabes et M. Sissi a lancé le 16 février ses avions de combat contre des positions de l'EI en Libye voisine.

Vendredi à l'ouverture de la conférence économique internationale sur l'"Avenir" de l'Egypte à Charm el-Cheikh, station balnéaire du Sinaï, l'Arabie saoudite, les Emirats arabes unis et le Koweït, qui ont déjà déversé des milliards sur l'Egypte depuis la destitution de M. Morsi, ont créé la surprise en promettant 12 milliards de dollars d'aides ou d'investissements cumulés, dont trois milliards en dépôts à la Banque centrale. Oman a rajouté 500 millions.

"Je pense que le message est clair: la plus grande partie du monde soutient le gouvernement engagé à construire la nouvelle Egypte", a commenté pour l'AFP Ashraf el-Arabi, le ministre égyptien de la Planification.

Car l'enjeu de cette conférence reste avant tout politique, M. Sissi souhaitant se poser en président fort qui a su rétablir la sécurité et la stabilité du pays.

"Le soutien des pays du Golfe est construit sur le fait que le gouvernement égyptien s'est opposé au mouvement des Frères musulmans", dont est issu M. Morsi, analyse Moustafa Kamel al-Sayyed, professeur de sciences politiques à l'Université du Caire, soulignant que, comme l'Egypte, les pays du Golfe considèrent la confrérie comme "terroriste".

L'expert juge également que le soutien des Etats-Unis vient du fait qu'ils "considèrent que le gouvernement égyptien fait face à la menace des mouvements terroristes. "

Mais même s'il a réitéré le soutien de son pays à l'Egypte, le chef de la diplomatie américaine John Kerry est venu à Charm el-Cheikh les mains vides. Il a promis samedi une "décision très prochainement" pour le déblocage d'une dernière enveloppe d'assistance militaire de 650 millions de dollars.

Les Etats-Unis allouent en principe chaque année 1,5 milliard de dollars d'aide à l'Egypte, dont 1,3 milliard dans le domaine militaire. Mais une partie avait été gelée avec la destitution de M. Morsi et la sanglante répression de ses partisans. Washington avait conditionné la reprise de cette aide à des réformes démocratiques.

Depuis, des hélicoptères de guerre Apache ont été livrés pour appuyer Le Caire dans sa lutte contre les jihadistes dans le Sinaï.

Mais l'ONU et de nombreuses ONG de défense des droits de l'Homme continuent d'accuser M. Sissi d'avoir mis en place un régime plus répressif encore que celui de Hosni Moubarak, renversé en 2011 par une révolte populaire.

En un an et demi, plus de 1. 400 manifestants pro-Morsi ont été tués, plus de 15. 000 de ses partisans emprisonnés et des centaines condamnés à mort dans des procès de masse expéditifs.

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Libya

Libya: The United Nations and Libya - Again

Another multinational military deployment in Libya is being suggested, following the spread of ISIS violence to parts of that country. But the world must not be railroaded into another UN-supported deployment of troops to back Western military and economic interests in Libya. There should be clear opposition to proxy wars in Libya and for the UN to expose and expel Egypt, Qatar, Turkey and Saudi Arabia from their mischief-making in Libya.

INTRODUCTION

The hysteria over the possible deployment of Western troops to West Asia and North Africa is again on the rise. With every passing day there is some new headline about rape, mutilations, beheadings and mass killings by ISIS.

For the last nine months the news about these killings came out of Syria and Iraq, but in the week of February 15, there was the video clip of the beheading of 21 Egyptian workers in Libya. This writer joins with all those who condemn this vicious and barbaric act.

The Pope has called the beheadings, "barbaric assassinations." Naturally, the world vented and there was righteous outrage all around. What was missing, however, was a sober analysis of what created the conditions for this so-called "Islamic State" to grow in the Levant and now to appear in Libya.

In light of the beheadings the governments of France and Egypt called for urgent discussions in the UN Security Council in order for the UN to lift the arms embargo against Libya. From Italy, Western news sources are calling for an attack on ISIS in Libya before it reaches Europe.

At the same moment while the Egyptians were soliciting political support from Europe for its intervention in Libya, the government of Qatar, which has been waging a proxy war with Saudi Arabia and Egypt in Libya, withdrew its ambassador from Egypt.

Using the news organization Al Jazeera to bring out its point of view, Qatar's foreign ministry said Doha had expressed reservations over the raids, stressing the need for "consultations before any unilateral military action against another member state." The Qatari government was protesting the bombing of innocent civilians in Libya.

Some diplomats at the United Nations claim that the government of Egypt led by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is seeking the green light from the United Nations for more open military intervention in Libya. The Egyptian military leadership has been involved on one side of the widening wars in North Africa and West Asia for some

time, having participated in bombing of some factions in Libya last year.

The beheadings of 21 Egyptian workers in the town of Sirte in Libya has been the new reason used by General Sisi to launch a new wave of air strikes in Libya. Yet, although the beheadings had taken place in Sirte, the aerial bombings took place in Derna, the seat of that faction of Libyan society that had been manipulated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) since the wars in Afghanistan in the eighties.

Although this inconsistency in the actions of the government of Egypt has been glossed over by the Western mainstream media, these same vehicles of militarism expressed shock at the news of the beheadings of Coptic Christians in Libya, and the rise of the so-called Islamic State in Libya.

Where was this media when there was the ethnic cleansing of Tawergha? How did this same media act as cheerleaders for the NATO intervention in 2011? Our argument in this commentary is that the same Western states and their strategic think tanks that drove the wars in Iraq and the intervention in Libya cannot give leadership in the United Nations over the questions of peace and reconciliation.

Angola, China, Malaysia and Venezuela will stand condemned in the court of progressive public opinion if these countries in the UN Security Council allow the world to be railroaded into another UN supported deployment of troops to support western military and economic interests in Libya. This writer is calling for an international commission that can document the role of NATO, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Qatar with a view to setting the conditions for an international force to intervene in Libya to disarm the militias.

Such an international force would exclude members of NATO and the current combatants in Libya: Qatar, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt. We will examine the context of the beheadings in Sirte and focus on the struggles over the Central Bank in Libya and how the NATO governments are maneuvering for their "internationally recognized" government to get their hands on the billions of dollars in reserves in Libya.

BEHEADINGS IN SIRTE

The so-called ISIS in Libya have mastered the art of propaganda and have learnt how to use the media to strike fear in the hearts and minds of the citizens of Western Europe and North America, while committing real crimes against humanity in the Levant. Military information operation is now such a central part of modern warfare, that those who have trained this Jihadist front know how to produce slick media products for maximum shock value.

Although the small base of Libyans who say that they adhere to ISIS in Libya is in the East in Derna, those who carried out the beheadings of the 21 Egyptian workers choose the city of Sirte.

This was the birthplace of Gaddafi. It was the seat of the idea of the Constitutive

Act of the African Union and it is near to the center of the institutions that hold real power in Libya: Tripoli. At the seat of power are two of the most important organizations for those who want to wield power, the Central Bank and the National Oil Company.

From all reports, the video of the beheadings had been skillfully produced with one of the beheaders pointing to Europe. This heinous media event had its desired effect. European newspapers have now carried stories about how ISIS considers Libya as the gateway to Europe. One British newspaper noted, "In Isis we are observing a level of atrocity towards mankind that, post-Nazism, we hoped we would never again witness." [1]

Every killing, beheading and rape has become a media event without real alternatives to the Western drumbeat for perpetual war. Last year when the so-called ISIS made their appearance, it appeared that for westerners, ISIS was barbaric only when they killed westerners or those considered to be Western allies in the region. But those suffering under their military advance know firsthand about these ISIS forces that had been trained by those who support radical extremists and use religion as a cover.

In October 2014, Human Rights Watch reported that "Islamic State militants drove 600 Shia, Christian, and Yazidi male prisoners into the middle of the desert, lined them up along the edge of a ravine, and executed them at point blank range." [2]

Britain and the USA who clearly understand and know the sources of finance, weapons and training for ISIS have joined in condemnation of the atrocities while retreating from exposing the real supporters of ISIS. The governments of Britain, the United States, France, Italy, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have the capabilities to track the financial backers of ISIS.

ISIS is following a grand tradition of beheadings and cutting off of hands that had been perfected by repressive governments for centuries.

The difference here is that the forces of ISIS were nurtured out of the reckless actions of Western imperialism in North Africa and West Asia over the past twenty years.

Progressive intellectuals and anti-imperial forces have for long been pointing to the fact that the war against the regime of Assad in Syria by the Saudi and Israelis provided the conditions for the rise of ISIS. Patrick Cockburn has spelt the regional and factional forces that coalesced into the formation that is now called ISIS in the book, 'The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution'. [3] This knowledge is kept away from Western citizens as the military and political establishments skillfully use the atrocities of ISIS to promote their political agendas.

The British Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, condemned the murders in Libya and said the UK remains fully supportive of the UN's efforts to build a national

unity government for Libya.

"Such barbaric acts strengthen our determination to work with our partners to counter the expanding terrorist threat to Libya and the region. Acts of terrorism should not be allowed to undermine Libya's political transition. We remain fully supportive of the UN's efforts to build a national unity government for Libya and to bring a political solution to the ongoing security crisis. Those who support terrorists can have no part in this process."

The White House called the killings "despicable and cowardly." "This wanton killing of innocents is just the most recent of the many vicious acts perpetrated by Isil-affiliated terrorists against the people of the region, including the murders of dozens of Egyptian soldiers in the Sinai, which only further galvanises the international community to unite against Isil," said spokesman Josh Earnest.

"This heinous act once again underscores the urgent need for a political resolution to the conflict in Libya, the continuation of which only benefits terrorist groups, including Isil." From the White House and from Britain, the world is alerted to the fact that the West is working on "political resolution" to the conflict in Libya.

BUT WHO IS THE SO-CALLED LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT IN LIBYA?

When the United Nations Security Council passed the resolution that gave NATO the green light to intervene in Libya in 2011, it gained the support of a small group of opposition forces that called themselves the National Transitional Council. These Libyans created a political body with 33 representatives from most Libyan regions.

The one thing they could agree on was opposition to Gaddafi, but they could not agree on how to develop a political program to reconstruct Libya. After the fall of Gaddafi and the withdrawal of the NATO jets and Special Forces from Qatar, the NTC split into different factions.

Those who had access to the weapons gained the upper hand. The United States started out as a competitor with France and Britain, seeking to install a transition process.

The late Ambassador Christopher Stevens was one of the foremost articulators of the 'transition' plan with the agencies and contractors such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Rand Corporation, the National Democratic Institute and the State Department travelling to Libya with consultancies to establish "good governance." We learnt from the army newssheet 'Stars and Stripes' that under this transition plan, the US Africa Command was supposed to gain a contract for US \$600 million to train 8,000 Libyan soldiers.

As with all well laid plans, reality intervened. The civilian leaders of the NTC proved incapable of building basic political organizations and those with the guns who had been organized into militias refused to disarm.

At first, the plan was for the Central Bank to pay-off the more than 200,000 youths in these militias with monthly stipends, but as the elements with guns grasped the political and organizational weakness of those in the transitional parliament, they decided to flex their muscles.

When these armed elements started kidnapping and killing the officials of the NTC, many of whom ran away to Cairo, Malta, Dubai or to Geneva, depending on their financial strength, the infighting between the militias and the bureaucrats consumed many of the NGO workers who had joined in the rebellion such as Salwa Bugaighis.

Small Gulf entities such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar took sides in the internecine battles providing weapons and logistics as the armed elements sidelined the politicians who had been anointed by the West to succeed in Libya.[4] Frederic Wehrey, writing for Foreign Affairs magazine last year, noted that both sides of the Libyan political divide are supported by external forces:

"Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have backed Dignity, while Qatar, Sudan, and Turkey are purported to be backing Dawn. Contrary to some commentary, both sides have used force against civilians and elected institutions, and both show little sign of compromise.

Despite Western diplomatic and political support, and with the military support of Egypt and the UAE, the rump of the NTC could not organize to defend themselves and gradually left Tripoli, settling to set up its Parliament in the far East in the area around Tobruk-Bayda. The seat of the Western recognized government is supposed to be Bayda."

What the knowledgeable reader will grasp here is that the fighting in Libya is being supported by the staunchest allies of the United States, Britain, France and Italy.

These countries have pushed the United Nations to pass a resolution to buy time for the factions of the Libyan political class that has been pushed out of Tripoli. This section of the Libyan political class is organized around the Council of Representatives (COR).

The State Department in their document on transition stated that, "The United States government, the European Union, and several Middle Eastern governments have stated their view that the COR and the interim government led by Al Thinni are the legitimate governing bodies in the country."

With their diplomatic muscle in the Security Council of the United Nations, NATO members, especially the P3 (Britain, France and the United States) have opposed calls from the African Union and from the BRICS states for a full evaluation of the NATO intervention in 2011. Instead, the P3 pushed for the naming of a Special Representative to Libya.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Bernardino León, was

handed the task of giving meaning to the transition plans that had been hatched by Western think tanks. Leon's mandate was "to help establish a ceasefire, facilitate political dialogue and support the work of the House of Representatives and Libyan Government in establishing an inclusive political framework as part of the democratic transition."

REAPING THE HARVEST OF WESTERN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS IN LIBYA

Throughout the years of imperial opposition to Muamar Gaddafi, the Western intelligence agencies cultivated the Islamists in Libya because political opposition to Gaddafi had taken religious forms. The West invested heavily in the Eastern part of Libya and cities such as Benghazi and Derna built networks of fighters who were interspersed with Western military forces in Afghanistan and other sites of destabilization.

More than eight years ago, a West Point study drew attention to the fact that the corridor which goes from Benghazi to Tobruk, passing through the city of Darnah (also called Derna) represented one of the greatest concentrations of jihadi terrorists to be found anywhere in the world.

It was from the East where the rebellion was stoked and after the fall of Gaddafi, it was from this same region where the CIA recruited Jihadists to fight against the Assad regime in Syria.

However, these Jihadists could not be controlled and when they fell out, the world found out about the den of Jihadists in the East when the US Ambassador to Libya was consumed in the struggles between competing militias at a CIA facility in Benghazi in 2012. There is a long list of individuals that in the past worked with Western intelligence operations and are now labelled as terrorists.

Ahmed Abu Khattala and Abu Anas al-Libi are two such individuals who have been involved in the shadowy networks of jihadists and western intelligence organizations. When Ahmed Abu Khattala was picked up in Libya by Western military forces, the New York Times ran the story: "Brazen Figure May Hold Key to Mysteries: Ahmed Abu Khattala Capture May Shed Light on Benghazi Attack." [5]

In 2013, Abu Anas al-Libi was captured on the streets of Tripoli by US Delta Force and Al-Libi was quickly flown out of Libya. He was then extradited to New York to stand trial for helping to mastermind the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing in Nairobi, Kenya. Abdul-Hamed al-Ruquai is another name for Abu Anas al-Libi.

His career as an operative with long connections to British and US intelligence services was about to be exposed in the trial which was supposed to start in January 2015.

Then before his trial on terrorism charges was set to begin in Manhattan federal court, Anas al-Libi died in custody. This was a most convenient death because in his untimely death, the world will never know why the British government had released Al Libi when Britain knew full well the ties between the Al Qaeda forces

and the extremists from Libya who wanted to fight Gaddafi.[6]

ENTER GENERAL KHALIFA HIFTER AND "DISPUTED LEGITIMACY"

Abu Anas al-Libi and Ahmed Abu Khattala were only two of the hundreds of Libyans who had gained their expertise from the networks that were spawned by Western intelligence forces in the anti-Gaddafi fight. These groups could never agree and ended up in rival militias.

Those militias that were from the western parts of Libya coalesced around the groups called Dawn. Dawn forces were resisting the domination of the bureaucratic and professional elements who called themselves the legitimate government. This faction won the most recent 'elections' in Libya. This is the faction that claims international legitimacy, the 200-member Council of Representatives (COR).

With the support of Qatar, Sudan, and Turkey, the "illegitimate forces" controlled one of the most strategic assets in post-Gaddafi Libya, the Central Bank. It is reported that there is over \$100 billion under the Governor of the Central Bank.

These militias, with the backbone forces hailing from Misrata, had pushed through a law in 2013 excluding former officials of the Gaddafi government from participating in the government.[7] This law was one of the many steps to marginalize those educated elements who had worked closely with Saif Al Islam as "reformers" but had jumped ship to place themselves at the head of the rebellion in 2011.

One of those who had placed himself at the head of the rebellion was General Hifter who had been part of the armed forces of Libya under Gaddafi. In the 1980s he joined the opposition and retreated to Virginia in the USA. After the incessant NATO bombings in 2011, he returned to Libya and placed himself as the most senior officer in the rebellion, especially after the assassination of General Younis.

There were credible media reports that Hifter returned with the blessings of a faction of the US policy-making community based in Langley, Virginia. Like the Western supported (COR), Hifter could not build a real political and military base and was driven out of Benghazi militarily.

In February 2014, Hifter called a coup d'etat but no one paid attention. It was after this failure that Hifter turned to Egypt, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates for military support. Then, these states bombed positions of rival militias in Benghazi.

Hifter is supposed to be aligned to the internationally recognized government in Bayda, but as one can see from the withdrawal of the Qatar ambassador from Egypt, there are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council that do not recognize this government in Beyda. In many of the recommendations coming out of the think tanks and policy centers of the West there have been calls for reconciliation

between the Hifter forces and the Misrata forces.

The specter of continued proxy warfare between Qatar, Turkey and Sudan on one side and Egypt and Saudi Arabia on the other was very disquieting for the Western imperial forces that want to dominate the future of Libya and North Africa.

Hence, on August 27, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2174, authorizing the placement of financial and travel sanctions on individuals and entities in Libya and internationally who are found to be "engaging in or providing support for other acts that threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya, or obstruct or undermine the successful completion of its political transition."

THERE IS REAL MONEY IN TRIPOLI

Having failed militarily and politically to hold power in Tripoli, the Western backed forces of the COR that had been driven to the border at Tobruk then sought the intercession of the United Nations.

By the summer of 2014, Tripoli was no longer safe for Western embassies and their strategic planners. They fled to strategize from next door in Tunisia. The United Nations deployed Bernardino León to negotiate a settlement between the rival forces. Since these negotiations have been underway, there emerged an even deadlier struggle regarding the control of the Central Bank.

From the New York Times we learnt that the Treasury Secretary of the United States, Jack Lew, threw his support behind Sadik Omar el-Kaber, Chairman of the Central Bank of Libya. There is one branch of the Central Bank in Benghazi that was seized recently by the "internationally recognized government" forces loyal to Beyda, but the gold and reserves are held in Tripoli.

According to the New York Times, "The central bank, which holds more than \$100 billion in foreign cash reserves and investments, has so far remained aloof from the chaos that has steadily engulfed Libya since the ouster of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi in 2011. The bank's chairman, Sadik Omar el-Kaber, a respected veteran of several international banks who was appointed by the Western-backed transitional government after Colonel Qaddafi fell, had sought to remain neutral.

'The central bank is the last line of defense of state institutions and it is very important that it stays far away from political struggles,' the bank said in a statement at the beginning of the month."^[8]

Where are the analysts who can shed light on why the US Treasury supports the faction in Tripoli that controls the Central Bank of Libya, while the Foreign Policy establishment and intelligence services support the Hifter faction that has been pushed to the margins of Libyan society in the Bayda-Tobruk region?

In the past six months, the United Nations has been seeking to give weight to this faction camped out in the East while awaiting Egyptian military support. Mem-

bers of the Security Council who have been destabilized by the activities of the NATO forces and their allies cannot be intellectually and politically lazy when it comes to this new quest by France and Egypt to seek the mandate of the UN to enter into Libya to give legitimacy to the Hifter faction.

The "internationally recognized faction" of Libyan society has now called on the Security Council of the United Nations to lift the arms embargo against Libya, so that Libyans can defend themselves against ISIS. This claim must be scrutinized by the real international community, the billions of world citizens who are suffering from the repression, exploitation, militarism and plunder of the imperial project of Western capitalism.

WESTERN DESTABILIZATION, ISIS AND THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY MOMENT

The uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia signaled a profound turn of the peoples against the plunder and exploitation of their societies. The Western political establishment and military that supported governments such as Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak were taken aback by the swiftness of the removal of these loyal servants of neo-liberal capitalism.

I argued in the book 'Global NATO and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya' that the intervention in Libya had been precipitated by the need to have a base to launch a war against the workers of Egypt when the revolution matures and the people rise up against the militarists of the region.

The same Western media that have been pushing the drumbeats of war are in the main silent when Egypt imprisons and kills those who want fundamental change in Egypt. In the same week that Egypt was bombing Libya, the courts under the military leader el-Sisi sentenced the prominent Egyptian activist Alaa Abdel-Fattah to five years in prison. Eighteen others were sentenced to three years in prison and also fined for opposing the military dictatorship in Egypt.

The politics of retrogression in Libya and Egypt has descended to such a state and the peoples do need peace. Yet the nature of the political and economic crisis in Egypt is in many ways even more dire to the point where Egyptian workers will still go to Libya to eke out a livelihood. Many from the progressive movements have retreated from a clear position of support for the Egyptian workers and their allies who want peace.

Everyone knows that the people of Libya need peace, but at this moment, the peoples of Egypt and North Africa who are feeling the heel of the repression of the Egyptian junta, also need peace. The Security Council of the United Nations must not be railroaded to place the Western-backed forces in charge of Libya. There should be clear opposition to the proxy wars in Libya and for the UN to expose and expel Egypt, Qatar, Turkey and Saudi Arabia from their mischief-making in Libya.

Western media have been most silent on the fact that it was the reckless NATO

intervention of March 2011 that set in motion the warfare and killings that plague Libya today.

Investigative journalists such as Patrick Cockburn have exposed the billionaires in the Gulf who bankroll the salaries of up to 100,000 fighters.[9] Officials of the State Department are fully aware that Gulf states have an interest in facilitating or turning a blind eye to terrorist financing. Those members of the current Security Council of the United Nations this year, such as Malaysia, Angola and Venezuela cannot allow themselves to be railroaded by the members of NATO who authored the plans that gave birth to the present quagmire.

When the New York Times queried, 'What Libya's Unraveling Means', it was one other attempt by the authors of the destruction to dominate the discussion on the possible alternatives to the quagmire that is now haunting the citizens of Libya and North Africa. The next day, the British newspaper the Guardian, carried the same sanctimonious tone with the headlines, "Libya's descent into violence."

From the Guardian, we are then presented with those authorities such as Frederic Wehrey of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Mohamed Eljarh of the Atlantic Council, Peter Cole, and writers such as Alison Pargeter for the UK military think tank the Royal United Services Institute as the reliable base for information. [10] These sources differ from the writings of Patrick Cockburn, Maximilian Forte, Vijay Prashad and other progressives who have been writing and speaking on the thousands killed in Libya since the intervention.

Alan J Kuperman has recently written a piece for Foreign Affairs on the debacle in Libya. In this article, Kuperman draws from the impressive documentation from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International on the massive killings in Libya, unleashed since the intervention.

He argued that, "This grim math leads to a depressing but unavoidable conclusion. Before NATO's intervention, Libya's civil war was on the verge of ending, at the cost of barely 1,000 lives. Since then, however, Libya has suffered at least 10,000 additional deaths from conflict. In other words, NATO's intervention appears to have increased the violent death toll more than tenfold."

Where Kuperman's analysis is weak is that he refuses to interrogate the duplicitous role of the CIA and Western intelligence in the continued disaster in that region.

THE NONALIGNED WORLD AND THE SPIRIT OF BANDUNG

This year is 60 years since the peoples of the global South met in Bandung to oppose colonialism and imperialism. In those 60 years the frontiers of colonialism have been rolled back but the West now uses financial warfare to oppress the peoples of the world to keep the bankers in power.

In a world where the bankers are promoting austerity everywhere, the push by Global NATO is to control all sources of maneuver by oppressing people. Religious

extremism has now been found to be a useful tool to promote barbarism and counter-revolution.

In a context of neo-liberal austerity and alienation, the payment of a monthly stipend by Gulf billionaires to unemployed youths is one more expedient to hinder the full mobilization and politicization of these youths of the full impact of capitalism on humans everywhere.

Pope Francis has weighed in on the beheadings and called the 21 Egyptian Copts who were murdered by supporters of the Islamic State "martyrs." The Pope stated that the 21 died purely because they were Christians.

ISIS is following a grand tradition of beheadings and cutting off of hands that had been perfected by repressive governments for centuries. Progressive intellectuals and anti-imperial forces have for long been pointing to the fact that the war against the regime of Assad in Syria by the Saudi and Israelis provided the conditions for the rise of ISIS. Other independent authorities reach even further back as in the case of the former UN Secretary General.

Speaking at the Munich Security Conference in Germany earlier this month, Kofi Annan blamed the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq for the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS), warning that the Middle East must evolve and adapt for lasting peace.

"The folly of that fateful decision was compounded by post-invasion decisions. The wholesale disbandment of the security forces, among other measures poured hundreds of thousands of trained and disgruntled soldiers and policemen onto the streets. The ensuing chaos has proved an ideal breeding ground for the Sunni radical groups that have now coalesced around the Islamic State label."

This same statement about the outcomes of the war in Iraq can be stated quite firmly in relation to the outcomes of the NATO intervention in Libya. In short, it is not possible to fully discuss how to rid Libya and North Africa of the so-called ISIS without a full blown examination of the role and activities of the Central Intelligence Agency in Eastern Libya.

Many of the misguided youths who are now called ISIS were recruited by the CIA in the aftermath of the overthrow of Gaddafi to go to fight in Syria. These same Libyans are returning and have understood the importance of propaganda. Hence, the slick video messages with profound bloodletting are staged for maximum shock. These recruits learnt the full meaning of Shock and Awe.

One can agree with the Pope that the beheadings represented a "barbaric assassination," but the Pope needs to use the moral authority of his position to expose and condemn the known elements that bankroll ISIS. Now, the military regime in Egypt is working with the faction of Libyans who are supposed to be the legitimate government to call on the United Nations to lift the arms embargo against Libya and to authorize the open military intervention of Egypt into Libya.

The Egyptian regime has now sought to neutralize BRICS by seducing the leader

of Russia and presenting himself as being anti-imperialist. Israel and Saudi Arabia are at the same time seeking to seduce China so that the forces of the global South will be divided about what is going on in Libya and Egypt. In the UN Security Council both the representatives of China and Russia are proving that when it comes to questions of destruction in Africa they will take a backseat to the machinations of the P3.

The progressive forces will have to be cautious about the hype over the so-called Islamic state. The political leadership of Saudi Arabia cannot support violent extremists all over the world and then seek to distance itself from elements such as ISIS that emerged out of its financing of Jihadists that are fighting in Iraq and Syria.

When the academics and scribes for the military and foreign policy establishment join in this new call for military intervention in Libya to fight ISIS, the progressive forces must organize in all ways possible to expose and deter the UN from giving legitimacy to the repressive regime of Egypt to whip up militarism in order to maintain itself in power.

- Horace G. Campbell, a veteran Pan Africanist, is a Professor of African American Studies and Political Science at Syracuse University. He is the author of 'Global NATO and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya', Monthly Review Press, 2013.

END NOTES

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ISIS Fighters Take Over Major Libyan Oilfields

4 March 2015



AFP/Getty Images: An image made available by propaganda Islamist media outlet Welayat Tarablos allegedly shows members of the Islamic State (IS) militant group parading in a street in Libya's coastal city of Sirte, released on Feb. 18, 2015.

Oilfield guards retreated after running out of ammunition

Fighters of the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) took over at least two oilfields in Libya and attacked another on Tuesday, according to oil and government sources.

Mashallah al-Zewi, the oil minister in the Tripoli-based government said ISIS attacked the Dhahra oilfield, before retreating. He told AP on Wednesday that the militants swept down from the central city of Sirte and attacked Dhahra oil field to the south, trading fire with guards and blowing up residential and administrative buildings before eventually retreating.

Colonel Ali al-Hassi, a spokesman for Libyan [oil industry security told the BBC](#) said the same fighters first took the oilfields at Bahi and Mabruk. "Extremists took control of the Bahi and Mabruk fields and are now heading to seize the Dhahra field following the retreat of the forces guarding these sites," he said.

Images published online by the [Libya Observer news organization](#) showed smashed metal equipment and the charred wreckage of a pickup truck at the Bahi field.

The attacks came as Libya's warring factions escalated their ongoing conflict. Forces aligned to the government in Tobruk and the rival Libya Dawn administra-

tion in Tripoli both staged air strikes on each other's positions on Tuesday.

Libya has passed through several phases of turmoil since 2011 when its leader Muammar Qaddafi was overthrown in an armed uprising supported by NATO air-strikes. Today, two rival governments are vying for power in a country divided among multiple armed groups.

ISIS, which sent fighters from Iraq and Syria to Libya last year, has also emerged as force in Libya, attracting some support among local militias. Last month Egyptian fighter jets struck ISIS targets in Libya after the group released a video showing the execution of 21 Coptic Christian hostages.

The two oil fields, located south of the city of Sirte, have been shut down for weeks in part due to security concerns. An attack on the [Mabruk field last month left at least 12 people dead.](#)

Even if they were able to operate the fields, insurgents would find it difficult to export oil via the country's Mediterranean ports. An attempt in 2014 by Eastern Libyan rebels to smuggle crude oil was stopped when U.S. [special forces boarded the ship, the Morning Glory, off Cyprus.](#)

Experts believe that large-scale oil smuggling from Libya is more difficult than in Iraq where [ISIS has been able to export oil to Turkey, Jordan and Iran.](#)

"There's no way to smuggle oil in Libya," said Jason Pack, a researcher on Libya at Cambridge University. "The difference from a place like Iraq is Iraq has a long tradition of oil from the Kurdish region going in trucks to Turkey. Libya has no such tradition."

Analysts say ISIS's advances in Libya have been made possible by the political conflict in Libya. This week's escalation comes as the recognized government in Tobruk officially appointed Khalifa Haftar as its armed forces chief. [Haftar's military campaign](#) launched last year against Islamist-leaning factions has further divided the country.

"There's ISIS in Libya because there's a lack of a state, and there's the ability of every militia group to control territory because the major factions won't work together," says Pack. "The absolutely only way to eliminate territorial pockets in places like Sirte and Derna is if these groups are willing to work together against ISIS."

<http://time.com/3731406/isis-libya-oilfields/>

Mali

L'ALGÉRIEN MOKHTAR BELMOKHTAR REVENDIQUE LA TUERIE DE BAMAKO

INTERNATIONAL - PAR JACQUES MARIE BOURGET - Publié le 08 Mar, 2015

Avec l'attentat au coeur de Bamako du 6 mars 2015, qui a fait cinq morts, dont un français, le djihadiste Belmokhtar, connu également sous le nom du "Borgne", relance la guerre au Mali. Portrait



Après une bagarre interne, comme celle qui l'a jadis opposé à « El Para », qui lui a fait quitter Al-Qaida au Maghreb islamique (AQMI), conflit ayant pour objet le partage des fruits du trafic et des rançons, Belmokhtar a connu son heure de gloire lors de l'attaque de ses troupes contre le complexe pétrolier algérien d'In Amenas durant l'été 2012.

Depuis, même s'il s'était fait discret jusqu'à la tuerie de Bamako le vendredi 6 mars 2015, le bandit peint en vert islam n'avait pas renoncé à sa guerre contre « les Croisés ». Depuis août dernier, après avoir fusionné son groupe, la katibat El Moulethemoune ("Brigade des Voilés"), avec le Mouvement pour l'Unité et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO), le « borgne » tente de reprendre le terrain perdu. C'est lui qui, est à l'origine des dernières attaques au Nord Mali, contre des cibles à Gao et Tombouctou. Coups de main dérisoire au regard des ambitions de Belmokhtar qui, selon des sources militaires, rêve d'une nouvelle attaque comparable à In Amenas...

Le califat for ever

Aux dernières nouvelles, la volonté de « Laaouar », comme on se surnomme dans le désert, est d'abord de relancer son projet de califat. Pourtant, en dépit de l'argent qu'il distribue, « le Borgne » laisse derrière lui nombre de mécontents. S'adressant à un journaliste de Magharebia, Ameknas Ag Akal, un jeune militant pour l'autonomie des touaregs du Mali, décrit les « atrocités » du leader jihadiste : « le mois dernier, dans le village de Tancotat, à cent kilomètres au nord de Kidal, vers la frontière algérienne, plus de trente civils ont été assassinés. Les tueurs appartenaient à la bande de Belmokthar. C'est lui qui finance tous ce gens-là ».

Toujours selon un témoignage recueilli par le même confrère, cette fois auprès de Mohamed Ag Ahmedu, "les populations du Nord-Mali commencent à prendre conscience du danger que représentent les terroristes. Ils s'en prennent même désormais aux bergers, pour voler leurs puits et leur bétail. Cela leur vaut une haine féroce, en particulier contre Laaouar, c'est lui qui les soutien".

Cette analyse corrobore les confidences délivrées par Tahaoui, un terroriste repenté auprès du quotidien algérien El Watan. Ce jihadiste qui a accompagné Laaouar pendant des années dénie à son ancien maître le droit de se revendiquer de l'islam : " Belmokthar est juste un criminel. Son expérience en Afghanistan lui a permis de se distinguer parmi les autres terroristes. Mais cela ne l'a pas empêché de prendre certaines décisions qui ont par la suite engendré des litiges avec d'autres leaders.

Courageux mais pas téméraire

Mais le courage de cet homme a des limites. Ainsi, en 2006, par peur de mourir il n'a pas hésité, dans le cadre de la « réconciliation nationale », à prendre langue avec l'autorité algérienne. Mais il faut savoir qu'il est capable de trahir chacun de ses frères. Les personnalités politiques qui, au Burkina Faso, au Niger, en Mauritanie, au Mali et en Guinée, entretiennent des relations avec lui devraient se méfier, c'est un traître dans l'âme ».

Affaibli par la chasse lancée contre lui par Alger, et aussi pas l'opération Serval, Belmokthar ne semble pas être en mesure de capturer de ces otages que naguère il libérait à prix d'or. Mais le terroriste algérien n'est pas « à sec » dans la mesure où il règne toujours sur le trafic de cigarettes et facilite l'acheminement de la drogue du Golfe de Guinée vers l'Europe. Jadis homme de terrain, Laaouar aujourd'hui se terre, sans doute dans un pays situé hors du « champ de bataille », et c'est depuis son repaire qu'il envoie ses ordres et les décisions du Conseil de la Shoura qu'il préside. Rester dans l'ombre est sa façon de survivre, mais elle laisse la bride sur le cou à des lieutenants qui peuvent, d'un moment à l'autre, le marginaliser.

Belmokthar suit heure par heure l'évolution de la situation à Kidal et dans le Nord Mali. La situation économique accablante, la politique humiliante du pouvoir central et l'impossibilité de la France à imposer une « solution pour les touaregs »,

provoquent de telles tensions que Laouar sait qu'il pourra, un jour, s'allier à nouveau avec des guérilleros de « l'Azawad libre »... contre Bamako et la France.

<http://mondafrique.com/>

Nigeria

Boko Haram gains new power by aligning with ISIS, say experts

March 10, 2015

By joining ISIS, Nigerian-based Islamic terror group Boko Haram has likely gained unprecedented power, resources and reach, according to intelligence experts.

Boko Haram, which has driven some 3 million people from their homes in northeast Africa over the last five years, slaughtering whole villages, taking women and children slaves, and setting off lethal explosions in densely populated areas, made the announcement it was joining the Middle Eastern group on March 7 on [an audio track](#) translated into French and English. Leading terror experts in the U.S. and Africa said the announcement to become a part of ISIS, a group that has horrified the world by beheading, crucifying, stoning, pushing to their death and even burning alive innocent civilians across Syria, Iraq, Libya, Algeria, the Sinai Peninsula, and other parts of the Middle East, has far greater implications than just being a mere symbolic act.

“Boko Haram has entered the realm of international jihadism, and by so doing will gain prestige among the vast supporters of Islamic State.”

- Veryan Khan, Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium

“Boko Haram has entered the realm of international jihadism, and by so doing will gain prestige among the vast supporters of Islamic State,” said Veryan Khan, editorial director of Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium (TRAC).

Conversely, ISIS, also known as Islamic State, will gain its first real step into Africa beyond mere cells, individual loyalties, and smaller less well-known groups, she said.

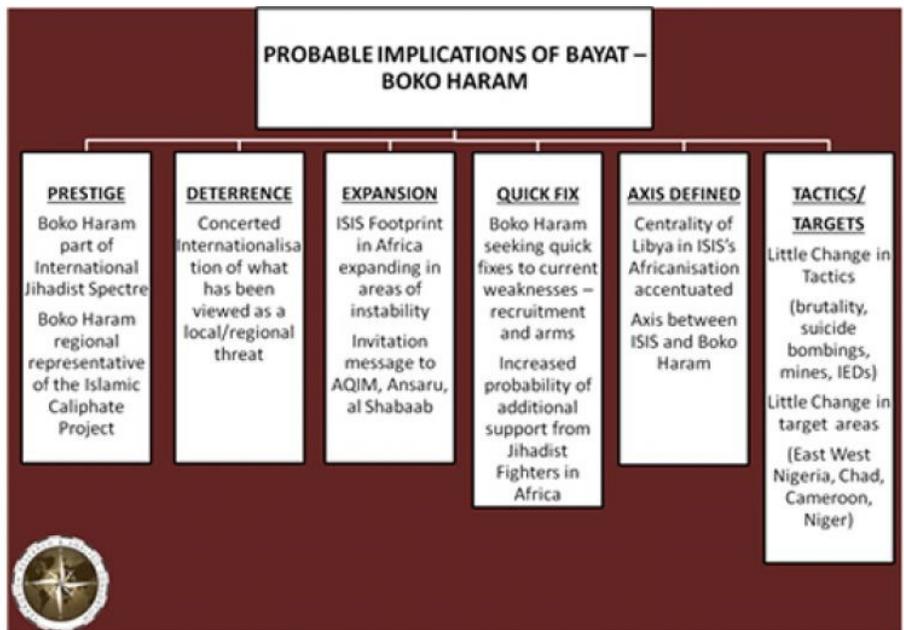
“Given the fact that Boko Haram not only controls large swaths of territory, holds hundreds and hundreds of hostages, and is the most successful terror operation out of Africa right now, ISIS has gained a real foothold,” Khan said.

The Islamic State must officially accept Boko Haram's “bay’ah” or pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State, though it is unlikely that ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi will deny it, considering his strategy of world expansion and control, said Jasmine Opperman, TRAC Director of African Operations.

Islamic State's focus remains Syria and Iraq but as seen in Libya, Africa will not escape the Islamic State's search for ever wider presence.

ISIS has flourished where there is weak governance and instability, and Africa has many such areas that could be seen as “lucrative markets,” Opperman said.

“When the ISIS accepts the pledge it will be a clear message to other groups such as Ansaru, AQIM and al-Shabaab to join,” Opperman said. “That will allow an expansion into north and central Africa similar to what was seen since June 2014 in Iraq.”



Boko Haram gains power and prestige by joining with ISIS, according to experts. (Graphic courtesy of Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium)



A poster advertising for the search of Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau is past-

ed on a wall in Baga on May 13, 2013 (REUTERS)

The pledge also will elevate the profile of Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, attention that "Shekau so desperately seeks," Khan said, comparing him to "witch doctor – part voodoo/part radical Islam," but noting he has had an image "makeover" in recent weeks.

"By Boko Haram pledging to the Islamic State, Shekau has secured a safe haven for Boko Haram's leadership. Even if the current Nigerian offensives are to succeed, a temporary escape could be made to another IS stronghold from where Boko Haram's life cycle can be maintained irrespective of distance," Khan said.

Boko Haram's pledge could be an attempt at seeking quick fixes to two areas they are currently struggling with, namely, recruitment and access to arms, Opperman said.

"Boko Haram is now part and parcel of the ISIS-aligned international jihadist threat," Opperman said. "Any deterring operation will have to take into account Boko Haram, and that means greater international involvement in an area already overwhelmed by foreign presence and interests."

While the pledge doesn't hand the reigns of evil completely to ISIS, "ISIS will provide a strategy and directly guide on who to target, where to target and how to target," Khan said.

The official pledge follows news [FoxNews.com](http://www.foxnews.com/) first reported March 2 that Boko Haram appeared to have aligned its media production, social media and execution style videos with ISIS, even placing the signature ISIS black flag in its videos on its military-style tanks.

<http://www.foxnews.com/>

Nigerian elections: what if Buhari wins?

Wednesday 11 March 2015 05.00 GMT

As the north of the country suffers at the hands of Boko Haram one former military ruler, known for his 'iron fist', is enjoying huge levels of support for his presidential bid. **Max Siollun** assesses what might happen if he wins



Presidential candidate Muhammadu Buhari waves to supporters as he arrives for an election campaign rally in Maiduguri, Nigeria on 16 February. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

With only two weeks to go until the most closely contested presidential election in Nigeria's history, the biggest issue on the agenda is security. From Boko Haram to the instability of the oil-producing Niger Delta, the political fight between incumbent President [Goodluck Jonathan](#) and the lead opposition candidate, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, revolves around who will ensure peace and stability.

Buhari is relying on his credentials as a retired general and [former military ruler](#) to convince the electorate that he is the man to end the violent [Boko Haram insurgency](#) that has killed more than 10,000 Nigerians and displaced 1.5 million others.

But what would Nigeria be like under a Buhari presidency? He has vowed to take the fight to Boko Haram, [crush the sect](#), and "lead from the front". Expectations of the stern and resolute general are sky high – many think he is [tailor made to end](#) Nigeria's insecurity, but is he the [reformed democrat](#) he claims to be?

Boko Haram

The rhetoric of his campaign suggests that the defence policy is likely to change

greatly under a Buhari presidency

Senior security figures have repeatedly stated that there is no military solution to the insurgency, and that the government must address the socio-economic causes of [Boko Haram](#). Nigeria's former chief of defence staff General Martin Luther Agwai has said: "You can never solve any of these problems with military solutions ... it is a political issue; it is a social issue; it is an economic issue, and until these issues are addressed, the military can never give you a solution."

Buhari has dealt with insecurity in Nigeria before. In 1983 he led an army unit that drove out Chadian rebels who had made incursions over the north-eastern Nigerian border. In an ironic reversal of fortunes, the Chadian army is now helping Nigeria to fight Boko Haram insurgents in the same corner of Nigeria. In response, Buhari has called the current Nigerian government's reliance on assistance from a much poorer country like Chad a "[big disgrace](#)".



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Chadian soldiers gather near the Nigerian town of Gamboru.

The current government's security forces have made tentative steps in the direction of a "soft approach to countering terrorism". The national security adviser Lt Colonel Sambo Dasuki appointed Dr Fatima Akilu, a psychologist, to work as the director of behavioural analysis and strategic communication in his office. Last year it was announced that Akilu had designed a programme for de-radicalising and rehabilitating militants, and a communication strategy to counter Boko Haram's narrative. However initiatives such as this will take years or decades to have effect, and the Nigerian public is not patient enough for incremental progress.

Advertisement

The rhetoric of Buhari's campaign suggests that the defence policy is likely to change greatly if he were to win the election. His tough-talking promises to confront Boko Haram resonate with the Nigerian public. He [has said he](#) "will not tolerate insurgency, sabotage of the economy" and, in reference to the instability in the Niger Delta, the "the blowing up of installations, by stealing crude and so on ... All these things will be things of the past."

If Buhari comes to power Dasuki and his colleague Lt General Aliyu Mohammed, the minister of defence, are likely to find themselves unemployed. Both men were key figures in the military palace coup that overthrew Buhari in 1985 (when Dasuki was a young army officer and Mohammed was the head of military intelligence).

There are questions over a military approach, too. So far, when the military has hit Boko Haram hard the group has escalated its violence and taken [indirect re-venge](#) against civilians. Even if Buhari does end the Boko Haram insurgency, the conspiracy theorists among his opponents will likely use that against him to buttress their narrative that the insurgency led by northern Islamic insurgents was a political ploy to destabilise the southern Christian President Goodluck Jonathan.

The Niger Delta

The Niger Delta insurgency carries more severe economic consequences than the Boko Haram insurgency in the north

Boko Haram is not the only security menace threatening Nigeria. In 2009, after years of disrupting Nigeria's oil production, exports and installations, more than 25,000 militants who waged an armed insurgency in the oil-producing Niger Delta areas of southern [Nigeria](#) to protest against economic exploitation agreed to lay down their weapons. In exchange for peace, the government promised to grant them amnesty, cash stipends, and training.

The elephant in the Nigerian room is that the government's amnesty deal with the Niger Delta militants expires later this year, and the militants have [threatened to take up arms](#) again if Jonathan is not re-elected. Many militants see Jonathan – who comes from Bayelsa State, the heartland of Nigeria's oil producing region – as [one of their own](#).

[Eighty percent of the Nigerian government's income](#) comes from oil exports, so the Niger Delta insurgency carries much more severe economic consequences than the Boko Haram in the north. Worryingly, four states in the Delta (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States) [alone produce 80%](#) of Nigeria's oil (out of a total of 36 states in Nigeria).



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Four states in the Delta alone produce 80% of Nigeria's oil.

Although Buhari has said very little about the Niger Delta during his election campaign, the militants have reason for discomfort if Buhari becomes president. Militant leaders have become [very rich](#) from government patronage and contracts. Many ex-militants have been awarded security contracts to guard the oil installations they once protested against and attacked. Buhari – a man with a reputation for austerity and a no-nonsense approach to hard graft – is not the type of person to pay people money to *not* be violent.

In addition Nigeria's ethnic, geographic, and religious differences can prove explosive, and it's unlikely that Buhari – a Muslim from northern Nigeria – will treat the southern Christian Niger Delta militants differently to the Islamic Boko Haram, who this week [declared their allegiance](#) to Isis. Buhari simply won't be able to hit one group of insurgents with an iron fist while negotiating with the other. But, if he stops the Niger Delta militants' payments, then the country could face the daunting prospect of simultaneous insurgencies in both the north and south.

Those who have worked with Buhari describe him as "strong willed" and "completely inflexible"; suggesting that his resolute and unyielding temperament means he will stick to his words and will try to force a result with insurgents on the battlefield, rather than in the negotiating room.

If he becomes president after the vote, postponed until the 28th of March, Buhari will face the unenviable task of inheriting a nightmarish security landscape. But Nigeria's problems are so deep and complex that they are likely to outlast Jonathan, however long he hopes to cling to power, and Buhari too if he is successful.

Max Siollun is a Nigerian historian, writer, and author of the books [Oil, Politics and Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture 1966-1976](#) and [Soldiers of Fortune: a History of Nigeria \(1983-1993\)](#). Follow him on Twitter [@maxsiollun](#)

<http://www.theguardian.com/>

African Training Exercise Turns Urgent as Threats Grow

MARCH 7, 2015



African Troops Train With Urgency as Terrorist Groups Make Advances

MAO, Chad — An oath of allegiance from Boko Haram, the [Nigeria](#)-based militant group, to the Islamic State on Saturday reinforces Western fears that the terrorist group is growing beyond its base in Iraq and Syria. These worries have prompted American and allied commandos to rush to train African counterterrorism troops to fight extremists on the continent.

The expanding effort here on the edge of the Sahara to fight militancies like Boko Haram comes as the group has kidnapped schoolgirls, slaughtered thousands of people, and now has expanded its attacks from Nigeria into Cameroon, Niger and [Chad](#).

“When your neighbor’s house is burning, you have to put it out, because if not, yours is next,” said Lt. Col. Brahim Mahanat, a Chadian Army officer who spoke during the Pentagon’s annual military exercise with 1,200 African troops, United States Army Special Forces and other Western commandos, which ends on Monday.

More than any exercise in the past decade, this year’s training — three weeks of marksmanship, mock ambushes and patrols in harsh desert terrain — is bumping up against real-world operations. The Chadian capital, Ndjamena, is just 30 miles from militant-held territory in Nigeria, and Boko Haram has vowed revenge since Chad began cross-border attacks against the militants. Police officers and army troops have stepped up patrols in the capital in response to increased risks, including suicide bombings.



The Chadian army trained with American Special Forces during the annual Exercise Flintlock in the Sahara Desert. Credit Tyler Hicks/The New York Times

Boko Haram has, in the meantime, pushed more than 200,000 Nigerian refugees across the border into neighboring countries. And on Saturday, three explosions rocked the northeastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri, killing dozens of people in the worst attack there since suspected Islamist militants tried to seize it in January.

“Boko Haram is not just a threat to our country or to Africa,” said Brig. Gen. Zakaria Ngobongue, a senior Chadian officer who has trained in France and at Hurlburt Field, Fla., and is overseeing this year’s exercise. “They are an international threat.”

The Obama administration agrees.

New Boko Haram propaganda videos, including beheadings, mirror the releases of the Islamic State and had officials in Washington and European capitals watching to see if the two terrorist groups would draw closer together.

The announcement by the Boko Haram leadership that it had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, also known as [ISIS](#) or ISIL, was still being analyzed on Saturday by Western counterterrorism officials, who said the proclamation appeared to be legitimate.

Officials suggested that Boko Haram, by aligning itself more closely with the Islamic State, was seeking to elevate its standing in the jihadi world, attract foreign fighters and possibly win financing from the militants.



“By allying with ISIS, Boko Haram is seeking greater validation in the global jihadi community,” said Laith Alkhouri, a senior analyst at Flashpoint Global Partners, a security consulting firm that tracks militant websites.

But American intelligence analysts said it remained unclear what specific fighting capabilities, if any, the relationship would add to Boko Haram, or how soon.

[Continue reading the main story](#)

Boko Haram seized the world’s attention last April when it kidnapped nearly 300 teenage girls in Nigeria. [While some girls escaped](#) the initial abduction, none have

been found since, and many are believed to have been married off to Boko Haram fighters. Last summer, the United States committed \$40 million over the next three years to help Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon develop more effective border security and long-range patrolling, and to pay for weapons, ammunition, night-vision goggles and radios.

In a reflection of heightened American and European concerns, Army Special Forces from Fort Carson, Colo., as well as other American Special Operations and military instructors from several Western countries, are training African troops here in Chad to conduct combat patrols and to foil terrorist ambushes, missions many of the troops will most likely carry out against Boko Haram. In another sign of the group's growing menace, the State Department recalled from retirement last month a former ambassador with longstanding ties in Africa, Dan Mozena, to coordinate the American diplomatic effort against the militants.

In West Africa alone, the United States has more than 200 Special Operations troops at any given time instructing local soldiers, but not fighting themselves. Navy SEALs are training Nigerian commandos for action in the oil-rich delta. Air Force Reaper reconnaissance drones support French operations in Niger and Mali.

With the backing of Western officials, African leaders have taken the unusual step of forming an 8,700-member regional force to combat Boko Haram. The success of this new African counterterrorism force will be a test of the Obama administration's focus on training, advising and equipping African troops to deal with their own security threats, rather than using American ground troops.



Boko Haram Kidnapping Tactics, Explained

In Nigeria, more than 200 schoolgirls have been held captive since last April. Some background information on the Islamist group that has been trying to topple the country's government for years.

No one is expecting it to be easy. The troop-contributing nations of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin must overcome years of distrust, rivalries and disparate military abilities to forge an effective fighting unit, Western and African officials said.

African officers, as well as observers from the United States, France and Britain, met in Ndjamena late last month to discuss the force's command structure and other details, but fell short of reaching a final agreement. More talks are expected in the coming weeks.

The American strategy in Africa also hinges on European partners that have historical ties to the region and forces there. France has reorganized its 3,000 troops in the Sahel — a vast area on the southern flank of the Sahara that stretches from Senegal east to Chad — to carry out counterterrorism operations more effectively, officials said.

As part of this regional mission, called Barkhane, or "sand dune" in French, France sent a group of 15 men last month to the city of Diffa in southeastern Niger, just across from Nigeria, to collect intelligence on Boko Haram, French military officials said.

Chad, Niger and Cameroon have already mobilized thousands of troops to push back Boko Haram, whose army of 4,000 to 6,000 fighters has overwhelmed Nigeria's underequipped and poorly led troops. So far troops from the three African nations have been able to reclaim in cross-border attacks some of the 30 towns in northeastern Nigeria that the militants have seized over the past year.

Chad's American-trained Special Antiterrorism Group forces, which have fought alongside French troops in Mali against Al Qaeda's affiliate there, are among 5,000 Chadian troops deployed to fight Boko Haram in the region. Cameroon's Israeli-trained rapid intervention brigade has also fought well against the militants, Western specialists said.

Photo



Participating nations provided medical training and care at a hospital in Mao, Chad, during the military exercise between African and Western counterterrorism forces. Credit Tyler Hicks/The New York Times

On Wednesday, President Idriss Déby of Chad said he knew the whereabouts of Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram's leader, and called on him to surrender or risk being killed.

This regional response seems to have stiffened Nigeria's spine as its troops have fought more effectively in recent weeks, chasing Boko Haram fighters out of some of the territory they controlled, Western officials said. "They got their nose bloodied," said Col. George K. Thiebes, who commands American Special Operations troops in West Africa.

Still, senior American intelligence and counterterrorism officials voiced skepticism that Nigeria and its neighbors would successfully contain the threat, at least initially.

"Boko Haram will probably continue to solidify control over its self-declared Islamic State in northeastern Nigeria and expand its terror campaign in neighboring Nigerian states, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad," James R. Clapper Jr., director of national intelligence, said in Washington in his [annual threat assessment](#) on Feb. 26.

Nicholas Rasmussen, the head of the National Counterterrorism Center, told a Senate panel last month, "It remains to be seen if the regional parties can in concert turn that tide."

Creating a regional force, which the participating countries initially embraced last October and the African Union authorized in January, will mean overcoming years of distrust between Nigeria and its neighbors.

Continue reading the main story



Graphic: Boko Haram: The Other Islamic State

“Regional cooperation so far has been weak,” according to an internal European Union assessment obtained by [Wikilao](#), a Rome-based security website, adding that future cooperation may be hindered by the countries’ “little tradition of working together and sharing a long history of local disputes, different languages.”

The irony is not lost on poorer French-speaking countries riding to the rescue of Nigeria, whose military’s negligence and incompetence has unleashed the militant plague on everyone in the region. “If there was will in Nigeria, Boko Haram would have never become what they are now,” said Col. Khassim Moussa, a senior officer in Chad’s Special Antiterrorism Group.

Nigerian officials privately acknowledged that their country’s military — which regularly contributes troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations — neglected the problem for too long. But Nigerian officials contend that many of Boko Haram’s heavy weapons are coming from Libya and the black market, and its neighbors have failed to manage their borders.

African officials say a model for their operation is the African force created several years ago to combat the Islamic militant Shabab group in Somalia. That force, which includes troops from Uganda, Kenya and Burundi, suffered through severe growing pains before emerging as a capable fighting unit.

Here in Mao, the main site for the military exercise, some 135 miles northeast of the Chadian capital, African soldiers teamed with American, Danish, Italian, Bel-

gian and other Western advisers to learn new skills, including how to counter an enemy ambush.

“This will help them raise their game,” said one senior Danish instructor, who like other trainers and soldiers could not be identified under the exercise’s ground rules.

One group of Nigerian Navy commandos, including many veterans of the six-year war against Boko Haram, paused after fighting through a mock ambush in the rolling sandy hill, to reflect on the emerging alliance.

“Before, people felt it was all Nigeria’s fight,” said one Nigerian commando cradling his Israeli-made Tavor assault rifle. “Now other countries are getting involved.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/>

Boko Haram peut-il devenir l'Etat islamique en Afrique? (ANALYSE)

2015-03-10 18:21:08 xinhua

Le chef du groupe islamiste nigérian Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, a annoncé le 7 mars avoir fait allégeance au mouvement djihadiste Etat islamique (EI) qui cherche à instaurer un califat au Moyen-Orient.

Boko Haram est un mouvement salafiste djihadiste du nord-est du Nigeria ayant pour objectif d'appliquer la charia dans l'ensemble du pays. Fondé par Mohammed Yusuf en 2002 à Maiduguri, le mouvement est classé comme organisation terroriste par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU et est parfois qualifié de secte. Abubakar Shekau a formulé cette annonce trois semaines avant la présidentielle nigériane que les insurgés islamistes menacent de perturber.

Son annonce d'allégeance n'est pas la première du genre, mais a attiré cette fois-ci l'attention des médias internationaux, a indiqué Li Wei, expert au Centre de recherche anti-terroriste de l'Institut chinois des relations internationales contemporaines.

Selon M. Li, Boko Haram avait tout d'abord mené ses activités dans le nord-est au Nigeria, mais depuis l'année dernière, ses activités terroristes traversent les frontières pour entrer au Niger, au Cameroun et au Tchad. Cette déclaration d'allégeance paraphe des similarités en matière d'idéologie (tous deux souhaitent l'instauration de la charia et d'un califat) et d'organisation d'activités entre les deux groupes, mais on ne constate pas de lien substantiel entre eux pour le moment.

Boko Haram opère depuis 2009 au Nigeria, où l'insurrection et sa répression ont fait plus de 13.000 morts et 1,5 million de déplacés. Les insurgés islamistes de Boko Haram ont enlevé à la mi-avril 2014 plus de 200 lycéennes à Chibok, dans le nord-est du Nigeria, ce qui a suscité l'indignation au niveau mondial.

Ces dernières semaines, les troupes nigérianes ont délogé les combattants de Boko Haram de différentes villes et communautés dans les Etats du nord du pays tels que Borno, Yobe et Adamawa. Pour sa part, Boko Haram a depuis début 2015 intensifié ses attaques dans le nord-est du Nigeria rongé par les violences.

M. Li a estimé que, grâce à son acte d'allégeance à l'EI, Boko Haram espère devenir un groupe plus important en Afrique comparé au Maghreb islamique et à al-Shabaab. Boko Haram souhaite aussi obtenir une aide financière accrue, recruter des membres plus facilement, et améliorer son influence régionale.

Boko Haram, dont le nom veut dire l'"éducation occidentale est interdite", contrôle plusieurs parties des Etats du nord-est du pays. Ce groupe armé se bat pour instaurer un Etat islamique au Nigeria, pays le plus peuplé d'Afrique. Mais, le fondamental de la menace terroriste est son caractère transnational.

He Wenping, chercheuse à l'Académie chinoise des sciences sociales, pense que Boko Haram est parvenu à se développer en seulement deux étapes : auparavant, il ne menait ses activités qu'au Nigeria, mais depuis l'année dernière, il a lancé les attaques transfrontalières dans les pays voisins tels que le Tchad, le Cameroun, et le Niger, ce qui l'a fait devenir une organisation terroriste régionale. L'annonce de son allégeance à l'EI l'a ainsi aidé à se transformer en une organisation terroriste internationale.

Le 7 février 2015, lors d'une réunion à Yaoundé, le Nigeria, le Tchad, le Niger, le Cameroun et le Bénin ont convenu de mobiliser 8700 hommes, au lieu de la projection de 7500 troupes annoncées par l'Union africaine (UA) en sommet fin janvier à Addis Abeba, dans le cadre d'une force africaine pour lutter contre le groupe terroriste Boko Haram.

L'offensive régionale lancée fin janvier par le Tchad, le Cameroun et le Niger -- eux aussi touchés par des attaques islamistes dans la région du lac Tchad -- a porté des coups aux jihadistes, qui ont dû abandonner plusieurs positions dans l'extrême nord nigérian. Tout cela a mis la pression sur ce groupe terroriste. Ainsi, à travers son allégeance à l'Etat islamique, Boko Haram espère pouvoir améliorer son recrutement international et renforcer sa présence sur le continent, a indiqué M. Li.

Boko Haram veut être considéré comme l'EI de l'Afrique, mais la lutte régionale et internationale contre le terrorisme n'est pas suffisante, a souligné M. Li, qui a précisé qu'en Afrique, la lutte antiterrorisme manque de cohésion, et que le contrôle des frontières doit être amélioré.

L'avis de Li Wei est partagé par Pape Ndiaye Diouf, directeur de l'Institut africain de formation pour le développement. Lors d'une interview à Xinhua, l'universitaire sénégalais a souligné qu'"il faut que les dirigeants africains prennent leur responsabilité historique pour construire une véritable union africaine, capable de réagir chaque fois qu'elle est menacée, chaque fois qu'elle est agressée, que ce soit sous forme d'extrémisme idéologique, religieux ou même économique".

<http://french.cri.cn/>

Allégeance de Boko Haram à l'EI: «un acte de désespoir», selon Abuja

10 mars 2015



Le chef de Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau

Le serment d'allégeance de Boko Haram à l'État Islamique est un signe de faiblesse du groupe islamiste nigérian, qui «est en train d'être éliminé» par l'armée nigériane et les troupes des pays voisins, a affirmé Abuja mardi.

Pour le porte-parole du gouvernement sur les questions de sécurité, Mike Omeri, il s'agit «d'un acte de désespoir, qui survient au moment où Boko Haram enregistre de lourdes pertes».

Le chef de Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, a fait cette annonce samedi soir sur une bande-son de huit minutes postée sur le compte Twitter du groupe.

L'armée nigériane, aidée par le Cameroun, le Tchad et le Niger voisins, a réussi à reprendre un certain nombre de localités des mains des islamistes dans le nord-est du Nigeria à la fin du mois dernier.

L'opération militaire régionale a pour but de stabiliser cette zone en vue des élections présidentielle et législatives nigérianes prévues le 28 mars, et déjà repoussées de six semaines à cause des violences islamistes.

Selon M. Omeri, la campagne en cours a permis de «déloger Boko Haram de ses fiefs et d'endommager sa force de combat».

«Boko Haram est en train d'être éliminé», a-t-il estimé dans un communiqué: «aucun extrémiste étranger ne peut changer ce fait --tant que l'armée nigériane

continuera à recevoir la coopération et l'engagement de ses citoyens et de ses alliés».

Le groupe islamiste s'était emparé de pans entiers de territoires dans le nord-est ces six derniers mois, et y avait proclamé la création de son «califat», menaçant l'intégrité territoriale du Nigeria et la sécurité des pays voisins.

Pour les experts, ce serment d'allégeance est d'abord une opération de propagande qui pourrait évoluer plus tard vers une véritable coopération.

«Il n'y aura pas d'État Islamique au Nigeria. Le seul État qui continuera à exister est la République Fédérale du Nigeria» a affirmé M. Omeri.

Les troupes tchadiennes et nigériennes ont annoncé lundi avoir repris la ville de Damasak, dans l'État de Borno (nord-est), qui était aux mains des islamistes depuis le mois de novembre.

Selon une source sécuritaire tchadienne, quelque 200 combattants de Boko Haram ont été tués dans cette opération, qui avait commencé dimanche. Mais cette information n'a pas pu être vérifiée de source indépendante.

Le colonel Sani Usman, porte-parole de l'armée nigérienne, a affirmé de son côté que les islamistes avaient «vécu leur Waterloo» quand ils ont essayé d'attaquer la ville de Gombi, dans l'Etat d'Adamawa, lundi soir.

«Un certain nombre» d'insurgés ont été tués dans des combats avec l'armée nigérienne, a-t-il ajouté dans un communiqué paru mardi, sans donner de bilan plus précis. Un soldat a été blessé, a-t-il ajouté.

Des armes ont été interceptées, dont des missiles sol-air et des milliers de munitions, précise le communiqué.

Les violences islamistes n'ont pas cessé pour autant: chassé de ses fiefs, Boko Haram a multiplié les attentats dans les grandes villes et les massacres dans les régions plus reculées ces dernières semaines.

Au moins 58 personnes ont péri samedi dans trois attentats à la bombe à Maiduguri, la capitale de l'État de Borno.

<http://www.lapresse.ca/>

Boko Haram beheading video shows ties to ISIS, say experts

March 02, 2015

Nigerian Islamic terrorist organization Boko Haram has taken a page out of the ISIS playbook, releasing a new video Monday of two prisoner beheadings so similar to clips posted by the Middle East jihadist group that experts now believe the terror groups are working together.

The 6-minute video, titled "Harvest of Spies," translated into English, French and Arabic, was posted Monday on Twitter by Boko Haram's media arm and initially reported by Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium (TRAC), which monitors terrorist groups online. It shows a farmer confessing under duress to spying for the police, and shows a second man, then cuts to footage of both, decapitated with their heads on their chests. The video was tweeted out by ISIS-affiliated Twitter accounts.

"This latest release shows Boko Haram is not a mere copycat of ISIS; rather, it is incorporating itself into the Islamic State," said Veryan Khan, editorial director of TRAC. "Islamic state supporters are already starting to call Boko Haram the 'Islamic State Africa.'"

The grisly beheading video was produced in the style of ISIS videos that have shown Americans James Foley, Steven Sotloff, both journalists, and aid worker Peter Kassig before and after they were killed. Boko Haram previously published only one beheading, of a Nigerian fighter pilot whose plane went down in September.

Even before Monday's gruesome video, experts had begun to notice the African terrorist group was beginning to adopt ISIS tactics. A slick recruiting video package Boko Haram released last month was so similar to one the Middle East jihadist group put out previously that analysts told FoxNews.com it could not be coincidental. A [trailer](#) Boko Haram released on Feb. 18 was followed by a [feature film](#) posted days later on Twitter Feb 21, a pattern that has become a hallmark of ISIS.

"This is huge news," said Veryan Khan, editorial director of the Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium, after seeing videos released by Boko Haram that use high definition cameras, special effects, and the same media platform as ISIS as polished as any of ISIS' sophisticated cinematography productions.

"I believe Boko Haram is more than just copying the Islamic State -- their image is being 'shaped' at very least in the ISIS media wing," Khan said. "Immediately after Baghdadi declared the Islamic State Caliphate, Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau did the same. We then started seeing (in the videos) the Islamic State flags being painted onto Boko Haram's most prized possessions, their AFVs and tanks, most recently on Feb. 20 during the ops within the Northeastern Nigeria border."

ISIS' cruelty -- beheading, crucifying, stoning and even burning alive its prisoners and putting it on high definition video -- has horrified the world. Boko Haram is

much older than the one-year-old ISIS, and has driven some 3 million people from their homes in northeast Africa over the last five years. Both groups have slaughtered whole villages, taken women and children slaves, and set off bombs that kill dozens at a time.

There is more evidence of this growing allegiance, including the ISIS flag on its logo, ISIS music and songs in latest Boko Haram propaganda videos; and Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau, praising leader of ISIS Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Jasmine Opperman, TRAC's director of African operations, and Khan, noted there also are similar propaganda strategies in terms of frequency, content representation and use of the social media Twitter.

"Jan. 18, Boko Haram opened its first Twitter account -- it was taken down within a week, but the group had never tried a campaign via Twitter before," Khan said, noting Boko Haram immediately gained more than 3,000 followers. "There was grassroots support for Boko Haram from Islamic State-affiliated Twitter accounts."

Another noticeable change -- some of the messages from leaders are targeting the West, translated into English, likely indicating the Twitter handler's content is produced, managed and distributed from outside northeast Nigeria, Khan said.

Another significant change to the Boko Haram strategy -- Shekau -- who Khan compares to a "witch doctor" -- does not make an appearance in the first new video or on the Twitter account.

"The very first video presented on this account was 'new style' video featuring an interview with a Boko Haram spokesman, not Shekau," Khan said. "This is very important to note because Shekau loves himself so much he almost never allows a major video to go out where he is not the star."

Then there is the notable image 'makeover' for Shekau in a video release that followed.

"If you have spent any time watching Boko Haram, you would know that Shekau is truly insane and his version of Islam is even too radical for Islamic State, a mixture of part witch doctor/part voodoo/part radical Islam. He is usually screaming, surrounded by a posse, and at least one tank," Khan said. "This last video is a totally new Shekau, calm, cool collective. Someone is directing his image. My thought is he is a wild card that Islamic State cannot afford to ally with unless they rebrand him or get rid of him entirely."

So why would the world's most terrifying groups align from different continents?

"The ISIS is clear in its objectives -- to expand the Islamic Caliphate Project by means of expansion and control," Opperman said. "This is not only achieved by means of gaining physical control in areas, but gaining support and loyalty from individuals, groups and organizations. A pledge of allegiance from Boko Haram will serve this objective."

In addition, Boko Haram is the only other terrorist group in the world that currently holds and governs territory, and is the only really successful terrorist group in all of Africa, Khan said.

The implications, both Opperman and Khan agree, are staggering.

"Boko Haram's power projection will gain an image boost with such a pledge," Op-

perman said.

She questions whether this will lead to actual action on the ground. Except for Libya, groups in North Africa -- Algerian and Tunisia -- pledged allegiance but did not gain much in terms of battlefield capabilities from the ISIS alliance, Opperman said.

“Unless there is a concerted effort from the ISIS to ship in fighters and weapons, Boko Haram is not going to gain immediate increased capabilities,” Opperman said.

<http://www.foxnews.com/>

Somalia

Al-Shabaab releases chilling video about Mpeketoni attack

March 9th 2015

Al-Shabaab has unveiled a chilling video of its bloody rampage in Mpeketoni and Poromoko villages of Lamu County on June 16 and 17 last year that confirms survivors' claims that white jihadists were among the mass murderers. Security analysts suggest the film is a recruitment strategy by the Al-Qaida linked group intended for Kiswahili and East African English speakers since many of the narrators speak in flawless Kiswahili with Mombasa accents although one talks in a typical British accent. It is not clear when the video was released. English sub-titles follow Arabic and Kiswahili narrations. The film is produced by Al-Shabaab's Al Kataib media agency under the title: "Mpeketoni-Reclaiming Back Muslim lands under Kenya Occupation" and its holistic analysis suggests that violence could have been planned for years given that part of the material justifying the mass murder was an incendiary speech by slain radical Muslim leader Sheikh Aboud Rogo Mohamed who was killed in Mombasa on August 27, 2012. A narrator declares at the start of the rampage that although Rogo did not live to witness the so called liberation of Coast from Christian occupation "his words are being transformed into reality". The, apparently, heavily edited film, shows at least three execution scenes in Mpeketoni and Poromoko where men were pulled from rooms, into town squares and shot at close range as well as what appears to be a decapitation in Mpeketoni, by a supposed Caucasian militant as the township went up in flames. Besides restating claim to the bloody night mass murder in which 65 people, all men but one woman, were slaughtered, narrators in the 34 minute video which was uploaded on YouTube on March 3, pulled down and uploaded again on Friday before being brought down again mocks President Uhuru Kenyatta, his spokesman Manoah Esipisu for their June 17 claims absolving Al-Shabaab from blame. The President boldly said the attack was politically instigated. "The attack in Lamu was well planned, orchestrated, and politically motivated ethnic violence against a Kenyan community, with the intention of profiling and evicting them for political reasons. This therefore, was not an Al Shabaab terrorist attack," said Uhuru. See Also: Girl 'hit' by officer dies after two months in coma Muslim land "The heightened political environment being experienced in the country where politicians have incited people will not be allowed as the government will not sit back and watch the country go through ethnic conflict again," the president added. Much of what is claimed by narrators is already known including claims the fighters came to avenge "occupation of Muslim land" and alleged oppression of Muslims. And analysts, who have studied the film, now confirm that contrary to previous reports, security officers resisted the attackers for a while and at least three Al-Shabaab militants were killed in apparent gunfire exchanges at Mpeketoni Police Station.

Read more at: <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/>

South Sudan

Peace talks collapse, election called off

In South Sudan, the conflict that started on 15 December 2013, and which has left thousands dead and more than a million displaced, has yet to come to an end. To date, there have been limited efforts aimed at national peace, justice, healing and reconciliation, and huge challenges remain in achieving the dream of a 'united South Sudan'.

The recent collapse of peace talks in Addis Ababa says it all. President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar have crushed the people's hopes by refusing to make the compromises needed for peace.

A possible solution would have been for the government to commit to its call for elections, which have now been postponed.

However, amid the current political climate, elections could make matters worse. It is high time that the country embarks on a nationwide dialogue with its people to decide on the way forward and save the state from total collapse. South Sudan has a history of war, which could complicate the effects of the newly announced United Nations sanction regime. The First Sudanese Civil War (also known as Anyanya 1), between the northern part of the country and southern Sudan, lasted from 1955 to 1972. Half a million people died over the 17 years of war. Sudan's independence in 1956 was heavily overshadowed by unresolved tensions between the north and south, while South Sudan's independence in 2011 left its population more divided than before.

The agreement that ended the civil war in 1972, just like current peace agreements, failed to dissolve the tensions that had originally caused the conflict. This led to a second Sudanese civil war, which lasted from 1983 to 2005. The period between 1955 and 2005 is sometimes considered to be a single conflict, with an 11-year ceasefire separating two violent phases. After the Comprehensive Peace agreement (CPA) in 2005, there was a remarkable period of peace between the north and south, but tension continued to escalate among southerners. Today, South Sudan is at war with itself.

In January 2015, the government of South Sudan called for an election to be held later this year. 'If there are people wanting to participate in the elections, they are welcomed – but we will not accept the democracy to be held hostage because others are not ready,' Kiir said at the time. The transitional constitution states that the tenure of the Office of the President shall be four years, starting from 9 July 2011, and the presidential term was therefore to expire in July.

On 13 February, however, the country's council of ministers decided to postpone the general elections and extended the tenure of the Office of the President by two years, to 2017. With the seeming failure of the peace talks hosted by the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), and the rescheduling of the elections, the situation in South Sudan could only get worse.

Even if general elections had taken place on 30 June as originally planned, this could have triggered another wave of violence as peace, justice and reconciliation were being ignored. Voting would have been problematic in various parts of the country, and the credibility of the elections would have been open to question.

The country is still without a permanent constitution that is 'owned by the people'. The current constitution was prepared hurriedly to usher in the independent state, and has outlived its purpose.

A permanent constitution would be the only answer to the current governance dilemma. Inter-ethnic warfare, which in some cases predates the war of independence, continues to be widespread. Despite many theories on the current crisis, the overarching principle behind it is poor governance.

The government should note that political legitimacy is something that is conferred by the people of a country when there is faith that the government's actions are an appropriate use of power, by a legally constituted governmental authority, and following correct decisions on making policies. An election is therefore a means, but not an end, to achieving this. In all democracies, the governed have a right to choose to consent; and holding an election on one side of the political divide due to insecurity and fear would only intensify a lack of legitimacy, and bring forth further divisions and tension.

The current Sudan People's Liberation Movement government was elected in April 2010 as part of the Sudanese general elections. This was long before referendum, independence and the country's transitional constitution. It will therefore be unjustifiable for the current regime to call for an election, whenever this might happen, using a constitution that is not people owned.

The government, with help of IGAD and international community, should sit with all political parties, civil society and other stakeholders to decide on the way forward for the nation. Dialogue is critical at this point in time, and the peace talks plus other reconciliatory efforts should focus on creating a firm foundation for the South Sudan state. This could be achieved through prioritising peace and reconciliation and ensuring a new constitution is in place.

<http://www.issafrika.org/>

Tunisia

Tunisie - Libye : une frontière à haut risque

9 Mars 2015

Le conflit libyen n'arrête pas de déborder sur la Tunisie dont la frontière est sous pression des djihadistes et des contrebandiers. L'économie de cette région en est affectée.

"La Tunisie est désormais entrée en résistance", peut-on lire dans un article du quotidien tunisien *La Presse* intitulé "Daesh aux portes de la Tunisie" (<http://www.lapresse.tn/17022015/95963/daech-aux-portes-de-la-tunisie.html>) et paru le 17 février, peu après l'assassinat par le groupe État islamique (EI) de 21 chrétiens égyptiens sur une plage de Tripolitaine, en Libye. Depuis que le groupe djihadiste a planté en novembre 2014 son drapeau noir à Derna, à quelque 1 300 kilomètres à l'est de Tripoli, sa progression le long de la côte méditerranéenne est indéniable. Il a pu étendre son contrôle sur Benghazi, Syrte ou encore Sabratha, à une centaine de kilomètres seulement du poste frontière de Ras Jedir - une des portes d'entrée en Tunisie - sans qu'aucun des deux gouvernements se disputant le pouvoir, celui de Tripoli et celui de Tobrouk, ne lui barre la route.

La Tunisie menacée à ses frontières

Si certains Tunisiens minimisent le risque de débordement du conflit libyen, refusant l'association entre "extrémisme" et "Tunisie", l'inquiétude reste perceptible. D'autant que la Tunisie est déjà la cible d'attaques au niveau de sa frontière avec l'Algérie. Deux jours après la revendication par l'organisation État islamique de l'assassinat de coptes égyptiens, quatre gendarmes tunisiens sont morts dans une attaque près du mont Chaambi, zone montagneuse du Nord-Ouest où opère la brigade Okba Ibn Nafa, affiliée à Al-Qaïda, et qui a notamment [revendiqué la mort de 15 militaires en juillet 2014](#). Cette série d'événements a conduit le gouvernement à intensifier sa "lutte contre le terrorisme". "En ce qui concerne la frontière tuniso-libyenne", précise Balthassen Oueslati, porte-parole du ministère de la Défense. "Nous avons renforcé les points de contrôle, les patrouilles et les opérations de ratisage", afin d'empêcher « toute intrusion d'éléments indésirables ou d'éléments terroristes », dit-il.

"Plusieurs centaines de Tunisiens combattent aux côtés de Daesh en Libye"

Les "éléments terroristes" sont les djihadistes, dont la Tunisie serait un des plus gros pourvoyeurs. Ils étaient environ 2 000 à être partis combattre dans les rangs de l'EI en Syrie, estimait en juin 2014 le ministère de l'Intérieur. Si ce chiffre peut être revu à la baisse en raison du nombre important de décès et de retours au pays, il est contrebalancé par une autre tendance. Après le quasi-démantèlement d'Ansar al-Charia, autre groupe islamiste radical tunisien, classé organisation terroriste en août 2013, certains salafistes ont rallié le maquis libyen. "Plusieurs centaines de Tunisiens combattent aux côtés de Daesh en Libye", affirme Alaya Allani, professeur

à l'université de la Manouba de Tunis et spécialiste des mouvements islamistes au Maghreb. Le groupe EI, dont la stratégie consiste selon lui à créer un "émirat" en Libye, y a établi ses camps d'entraînements, où sont orientées notamment les recrues d'Afrique du Nord. Ce nouveau développement en Libye ne pose pas pour autant le risque d'implantation de Daesh en Tunisie, avance l'universitaire, pour qui "les frontières sont bien contrôlées". Les questions de la radicalisation individuelle et du retour des djihadistes tunisiens restent toutefois posées.

Le durcissement des contrôles affecte l'économie de la région

Autre effet de la dégradation de la situation sécuritaire en Libye, la vigilance aux frontières pourrait être une arme à double tranchant. "Ces dernières semaines, on a vu la frontière tuniso-libyenne devenir plus hermétique, seuls passaient les convois humanitaires et les ambulances", observe le secrétaire général du Croissant-Rouge tunisien Tahar Cheniti, présent depuis 2011 aux postes frontaliers de Ben Guerdane-Ras Jdir et de Dhehiba-Wazen. Or, ces régions défavorisées tirent une partie de leurs revenus de la contrebande. Essence, électroménager ou quincaillerie "made in China" circulent de la Libye vers la Tunisie, et les produits alimentaires subventionnés dans le sens inverse. "Un contrôle trop strict des échanges pourrait pousser les jeunes à la violence sociale ou armée", alerte Hassan Boubakri, enseignant-chercheur en géographie à l'université de Sousse.

Le gouvernement un peu démuni

Face à cette situation, cependant, le gouvernement apparaît démuni. "Auparavant, afin d'éviter que les trafiquants d'armes, de drogue, ou les djihadistes n'empruntent les circuits du commerce informel, l'État exerçait un contrôle indirect sur les échanges en s'appuyant sur les barons de la contrebande", explique Hassan Boubakri. Mais le développement fulgurant de l'économie informelle transfrontalière depuis 2011 a brouillé les repères, affaiblissant notamment les pouvoirs locaux auprès de qui l'État déléguait son rôle sécuritaire. Il se replie donc sur le durcissement des contrôles à la frontière tuniso-libyenne... Au risque de voir éclater un conflit social.

Le climat se dégrade et assombrit les perspectives économiques

Sur le plan économique, les relations entre la Libye et la Tunisie pâtissent de la crise libyenne. Si le marché libyen reste la locomotive de certains secteurs économiques - le ministère tunisien du Tourisme a enregistré plus de 2 millions de visiteurs libyens en 2013 et près de 1,8 million en 2014 - la Libye, qui couvrait jusqu'à récemment 25 % des besoins tunisiens en pétrole, peinerait à honorer ses livraisons d'hydrocarbures selon [un rapport d'août 2014 de la Commission économique et sociale pour l'Asie occidentale \(CESAO\) de l'ONU](#). Par ailleurs, des dizaines de milliers de travailleurs tunisiens ont dû quitter la Libye depuis 2012. Enfin, et surtout, l'insécurité en Libye vient assombri les perspectives économiques de la Tunisie, qui sort d'une longue transition politique. "La Tunisie, comme tous les pays frontaliers avec la Libye, apparaît comme une zone à risque et elle a aussi des problèmes du côté de sa frontière avec l'Algérie", explique Saïd Haddad, chercheur associé à l'Institut de re-

cherches et d'études sur le monde arabe et musulman. "Cet environnement n'est pas propice aux investissements extérieurs dont elle a besoin pour se relancer", conclut-il.

<http://afrique.lepoint.fr/>

Terrorism in the World

Canada

Canada's government pushes anti-terror measures

Canada's government Tuesday fended off sharp criticism of a new anti-terror law that would grant Canada's spy agency sweeping powers in the aftermath of two deadly attacks last October, and pressed for quick passage.

"Canada is not immune from terrorism," Public Safety Minister Stephen Blaney told a parliamentary committee reviewing the bill after second reading in the House.

"Currently, CSIS (Canada's spy agency) can detect security threats but is unable to take action, unlike (what) most of (our) allies are doing," he said.

The government has hammered away at this message, pointing to a lone gunman's October 22 killing of a ceremonial guard and storming of parliament, and the hit-and-run murder of another soldier in rural Quebec the same week.

Blaney said it is crucial that authorities be given a mandate and the tools to track suspected extremists "at home and abroad" who would do harm to Canadians.

With this in mind, the government is seeking to pass the "Anti-terrorism Act, 2015" before parliament breaks in June, giving the Canadian Security Intelligence Agency (CSIS) increased powers to thwart terror plots.

CSIS's chief Michel Colombe was also scheduled to appear before the committee over the coming eight days of hearings.

He warned senators on Monday that the Islamic State group—which has made video threats against Canada—was spreading from Syria to Libya, Afghanistan and Pakistan, making a case for expanding CSIS's reach overseas.

Until now, CSIS has handed off cases to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to investigate and make arrests.

Under its new mandate, the spy agency will actively seek to disrupt threats and start working outside of Canada for the first time.

As part of that new mission, it could interfere with financial transactions, prevent a suspect from boarding a plane, intercept weapons or conduct "online counter-messaging," for example, by hacking a Twitter account used to recruit jihadists.

Three quarters of Canadians support the proposed anti-terror measures, according to the latest polls.

But Canada's privacy commissioner, Daniel Therrien, said the bill "goes too far."

He said it would give 17 government departments and agencies "almost limitless

powers to monitor and profile ordinary Canadians,” and 14 of them are not subject to independent oversight.

“While the potential to know virtually everything about everyone may well identify some new threats, the loss of privacy is clearly excessive,” Therrien said in a recent open letter.

Therrien is among 48 witnesses scheduled to testify at the hearing, including Supreme Court justices and Maher Arar, an engineer who was arrested by US officials in 2002 on a tip-off from the RCMP who suspected him of terrorism. He was deported to Syria and tortured for one year, before being cleared by Canadian authorities.

The leader of the New Democratic Party, Thomas Mulcair, voted against the act at the first reading, saying it was lacking in oversight and a danger to Canadians’ constitutional rights.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Conservatives “are going too far in eroding our way of life with their new anti-terrorism law,” said the NDP.

Other critics include four former Canadian prime ministers, and former top judges including Louise Arbour who was also U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Justin Trudeau, the leader of the third-ranked Liberals, has also criticized Harper over the bill, but will support it.

Monday evening, he accused the prime minister of fomenting an atmosphere of “fear” for political gain.

“It is always a short path to walk from being suspicious of our fellow citizens to taking actions to restrict their liberty,” he said in a speech.

Others such as Amnesty International, meanwhile, expressed concerns that the bill could be used against the government’s political opponents, including environmental and aboriginal activists.

The bill “leaves open the possibility that the act and increased police and CSIS powers could be used against First Nations and environmentalists engaging in non-violent protests against pipelines or other environmentally destructive projects,” said the David Suzuki Foundation, an advocacy group.

<http://www.japantoday.com/>

China

UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM IN CHINA – ANALYSIS

MARCH 3, 2015



The year 2014 saw a dramatic increase in terror attacks in China with nearly 300 people killed. Most of the attacks took place in the restive Xinjiang province where Islamist Uighur's groups have been demanding an independent state. While terrorism is not new to Xinjiang the intensity is clearly growing due primarily, but not exclusively, to foreign influence from radical groups in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

In May 2014, Uighur terrorists carried out their most deadly attack on China killing nearly 40 people. In September Indonesia's elite battalion 88 capture four Chinese citizens on suspicion of belonging to the terrorist organization Islamic State (IS). The four men are reported to be from the Uighur ethnic group and were in Indonesia to establish contact with local terrorist groups. In August Iraqi authorities release pictures of a Chinese citizen captured while fighting with IS forces in northern Iraq. Dozens of terrorists from the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and other minor terrorist groups were killed by US and NATO forces in Afghanistan since 2001. China Central Television (CCTV) reported that hundreds of Uighurs have left China illegally in 2014 to join IS in Iraq and Syria.

While many Western observers have dismissed groups like East Turkistan Islamic Movement as amateurs and claimed that China was exaggerating its capabilities, the fact of the matter is that Uighur extremist's attacks have grown more frequent and deadly. Over 200 people were killed in China in 2014 in such attacks. While

horrific these attacks were, they are rather low tech and used very primitive methods. However, as growing numbers of extremists gain experience in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan this is change fast.

Certain Western analysts simplistically claim that the reason why terrorists have not been able to carry more attacks in China is because of the extremely repressive internal security apparatus. This explanation ignores several facts. First China through the SCO had built strong cooperative security links with the Central Asian countries bordering Xinjiang. This has denied Uighur extremists vital sanctuary. China's foreign policy has emphasized mutual respect and non interference in the domestic affairs of other states. This has in turn gain Beijing good will or at least the neutrality of the Muslim world who had by enlarge abstain from supporting extremists. Finally the rapid development of Xinjiang and growing educational level of its population has reduced the appeal of fundamentalists.

Western scholars tend to argue that oppression and lack of freedom is what drives young Chinese Uighurs to terrorism. Thousands of Muslims brought up in the free and democratic West have join terrorist organizations in far larger numbers than Uighurs. So lack of freedom it's certainly not the reason why some Uighurs are joining IS and other terrorist groups. Unless these same Western scholars are willing to accept that France or Australia, from where hundreds of young Muslims have left a life of comfort and "infinity freedom" to fight in Iraq and Syria are not free after all. Its rather the appeal of a fanatic ideology to certain individuals that is behind this phenomenon. This is by no means to suggest that many of the grievances raised by ethnic Uighur citizens are not legitimate. Indeed, China could do much more to address the issue of severe unemployment and alcoholism among youths. The central government could also do more to promote Uighurs to top positions of authority.

As French President Francois Holland told a summit in Paris on September 15 in an effort to mobilize world opinion against IS.:

"With these terrorists you can't reason with. You have to conquer them"

While some in the West tell China to improve freedom and cultural tolerance to deal with its extremists, they have no qualms in conquering those terrorists who threaten their interests. Are there good terrorists and bad ones?

Western diplomats in Beijing demanded to observe the trial of Ilhan Tohti to ensure human rights and legal impartiality standards. However, several terrorist suspects were tried in the US behind close doors for national security reasons. At least 16 Chinese nationals of the Uighur nationality were detained in Guantanamo Bay and the US authorities strangely refused their extradition to China on human rights concerns. Considering the poor record of that facility this could only be seen as a bad joke. Several US Congressional and Senate investigations have shown that the US government sent dozens of terrorist suspects to Jordan, Pakistan and ironically Syria in the 2000s where they were tortured. Has subsequent investigations showed some of those tortured were innocent. The West is in no position to lecture China

on good counter terrorism methods or free trails.

Certain European countries gave asylum to Uighur terror suspects after they were released from Guantanamo .How would the West feel if China gave asylum to those who committed the Paris atrocities? While the world is right in condemning the barbarities committed in Paris. Western nations and media did not express the same solidarity when much worse attacks were committed in China.

Western governments fear the return of thousands of its Muslim radical citizens home where they could put their skills obtained in these conflict areas to devastating effect. Chinese leaders fear the same and their fears are as legitimate as those of Western leaders. The West and China have many points of disagreement, but on this one they must agree for the sake of the civilized world.

President Obama as accused China of “free riding” and not contributing enough to international efforts in Iraq. If the West wants greater cooperation from China it needs to treat China equally. There are no good or bad terrorists. Terror is terror.

**Loro Horta is a senior diplomat based in Beijing. He previously worked for the United Nations in Central Asia and as visited Xinjiang. He is a graduate of the Peoples Liberation Army National Defence University (PLANDU) senior officers course and also a graduate of the US Naval Post Graduate School and the American National Defence University. The views expressed here are strictly his own*

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

Iraq

Une vidéo de l'EI montre l'exécution d'un arabe israélien par un enfant

11/03/2015

Le jeune homme exécuté, âgé de 19 ans, était accusé par l'organisation terroriste Etat islamique d'être un espion des services secrets israéliens. La vidéo est accompagnée de menaces contre Israël, formulées en français.



D'après le ministère de la défense israélien, plusieurs dizaines d'arabes israéliens auraient rejoint le groupe terroriste Etat islamique.

Le [groupe terroriste Etat islamique](#) a diffusé mardi une vidéo de l'exécution par un jeune garçon d'un arabe israélien accusé d'espionner pour le Mossad, les services secrets israéliens, et dans laquelle un jihadiste menace en français de s'en prendre à Israël.

Dans la vidéo de plus de dix minutes postée sur des comptes jihadistes, un jeune garçon vêtu d'une longue tunique et d'un treillis, abat, d'une balle dans le front, un homme présenté comme Muhammad Said Ismail Musallam, avant de tirer plusieurs balles sur son cadavre.

Des menaces contre Israël en français

Aux côtés de l'enfant, un jihadiste s'exprimant [en français](#) évoque la récente attaque ayant visé des juifs en France et menace de s'en prendre aux Israéliens et de conquérir Jérusalem.

Outre l'exécution, on peut voir dans la vidéo un gros plan du passeport de la victime, ainsi qu'une liste de noms accompagnés de photos d'hommes présentés comme des espions d'Israël.

Selon les estimations officielles, la France est l'un des principaux pays occidentaux

[dont sont originaires des jihadistes en Syrie](#), où 90 Français ont été tués au combat.

"Mon fils est innocent"

En février, le père de Muhammad Said Ismail Musallam avait démenti que son fils ait travaillé pour le Mossad, après la publication dans Dabiq, la revue en anglais de l'EI, d'un article présenté comme l'interview d'un jeune de 19 ans envoyé, selon les jihadistes, en Syrie par l'agence du renseignement israélien.

"[Mon fils est innocent](#). ISIS (l'une des appellations de l'organisation Etat islamique, ndlr) l'accuse parce qu'il a essayé de s'enfuir", avait-il dit, sans contester que son fils avait interrompu son service civil israélien pour partir faire le jihad en Syrie.

Un porte-parole du Shin Beth avait affirmé que le jeune homme était parti le 24 octobre pour la Turquie, d'où il était passé en Syrie, et que, selon les informations israéliennes, il avait rejoint l'EI. Mais "[de sa propre initiative](#) et à l'insu de ses parents", selon le porte-parole.

Une dizaine d'arabes israéliens dans les rangs de l'EI

Les services de sécurité israéliens ont fait état ces derniers mois d'Arabes israéliens tués dans les rangs d'organisations jihadistes, et ont annoncé en janvier l'arrestation de sept Arabes israéliens accusés de planifier la création d'une cellule de l'EI en Israël.

Mercredi, le ministre israélien de la Défense Moshé Yaalon a annoncé à la radio publique que plusieurs dizaines d'Arabes israéliens avaient rejoint le groupe Etat islamique: "(Ils) sont partis se battre (en Syrie et en Irak), certains d'entre eux ont été tués, d'autres arrêtés à leur retour ou avant de partir, mais il ne s'agit pas d'un phénomène répandu parmi les Arabes israéliens".

"Vidéo choc"

L'EI a déjà mis en lignes de nombreuses vidéos d'exécutions. Selon Dalia Ghanem-Yazbeck, analyste au Carnegie Middle East Center, la "véritable force (de l'EI) est virtuelle, sur internet, sur Youtube... A chaque revers militaire ou presque, (l'EI) sort une vidéo choc pour que l'on parle de lui. C'est une manière de compenser la défaite militaire par la propagande".

C'est aussi une méthode de recrutement pour l'EI, dont le nombre de combattants, impossible à évaluer précisément, irait de 25 000 pour la fourchette la plus basse à 80 000 pour la fourchette la plus haute. Parmi eux, des milliers d'étrangers.

En Irak, l'EI est confronté depuis neuf jours à la plus grande offensive des forces gouvernementales, autour de Tikrit (nord), depuis la campagne fulgurante des jihadistes en juin.

<http://www.lexpress.fr/>

US TROOP POSITIONS IN IRAQ KEEP THEM OFF FRONT LINES

11 March 2015

The death last week of a Canadian soldier, reportedly killed by friendly fire from Kurdish troops near the northern village of Bashiq, has put the spotlight once again on the dangers that U.S. troops could face in Iraq.

After a brutal, nearly 14-year war that killed 4,500 service members, the Obama administration has made it clear that no more American blood should be shed in Iraq. President Barack Obama has vowed there will be no U.S. combat ground troops, but already nearly 3,000 U.S. troops are back in the country helping to train and bolster the Iraqi forces as they battle Islamic State militants.

U.S. officials, however, say that the American forces are operating farther from the front lines and none has taken fire. The bulk of the U.S. and coalition effort has been through airstrikes. Since last August, the U.S. has launched strikes on Islamic State militants or facilities at nearly 1,000 locations in Iraq, while coalition members have conducted about 540.

Some questions and answers about the U.S. presence in Iraq:

Q: How many American forces are in Iraq?

A: There are about 2,840 U.S. forces in Iraq, participating in Operation Inherent Resolve. Of those, 450 are trainers who are instructing Iraqi units in five secure locations around the country. Twelve advisory teams, comprising 200 troops of 15-20 per team, move around the country working with Iraqi brigades and headquarters units, and about 800 others are providing security for the U.S. presence. The rest are providing other support, including intelligence, surveillance and logistics.

Q: Where are they?

A: The 450 trainers are at five sites around the country: al-Asad Air Base in Anbar province, Irbil in the north, Taji just north of Baghdad, Besmaya just south of Baghdad, and a training center for special operations forces near Baghdad. Other forces are at joint operations centers in Irbil and Baghdad, or are providing support for U.S. and coalition troops around the country.

Q: How close to the front lines do they get?

A: The 12 U.S. military teams travel around the country to advise Iraqi brigades and higher headquarters. The U.S. troops are not authorized to go out on the front lines with smaller units. When the advise-and-assist teams go out, they have to get permission from senior leaders and there has to be a reasonable assurance that they will not come in contact with the enemy. Other nations largely follow those guidelines, but Canadian leaders, for example, have said their special operations forces have traded fire with militants on the front lines.

According to U.S. officials, there are more defined front lines in this fight in Iraq, as Islamic State militants dig in to protect the ground they have claimed, than in previous Iraq or Afghanistan conflicts involving U.S. troops. Those conflicts more often involved counter-insurgency warfare, where the battle lines are blurred.

Q: How many troops are in Iraq from other coalition countries?

A: There are more than 1,250 troops from other coalition countries who are participating in the effort to advise and train the Iraqi and Kurdish forces sites. They are: Australia, Great Britain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Norway. Some countries are providing instructors at the five training sites and others are sending troops out to work directly with Iraqi and Kurdish units in the field, and some are doing both. New Zealand is planning to participate.

Q: Have there been any U.S. casualties?

A: So far three U.S. military personnel have died associated with Operation Inherent Resolve, although none is classified as "killed in action."

Marine Cpl. Jordan L. Spears, 21, of Memphis, Indiana, was lost at sea Oct. 1, 2014, while conducting flight operations in the North Arabian Sea. Air Force Capt. William H. DuBois, 30, of New Castle, Colorado, died Dec. 1, 2014, when his F-16 aircraft crashed near a coalition air base in the Middle East. Marine Lance Cpl. Sean P. Neal, 19, of Riverside, California, died Oct. 23, in Baghdad, Iraq, from a noncombat related incident.

There are no reports of U.S. troops wounded in action.

Pentagon officials have consistently said that while al-Asad air base in western Iraq is routinely hit by enemy mortars and other fire, the U.S. forces on the massive facility have not been at risk.

<http://hosted.ap.org/>

«Daech sera battu», affirme Martin Dempsey

Le plus haut gradé américain est arrivé lundi à Bagdad après le lancement d'une vaste offensive pour reprendre Tikrit au groupe Etat islamique.



Photo: Keystone/AP/Khalid Mohammed

Le général Martin Dempsey a assuré lundi à Bagdad que le groupe Etat islamique (EI) serait battu. Il a toutefois appelé à la patience face aux jihadistes contre lesquels l'armée irakienne a lancé une vaste offensive.

Le général Dempsey s'est entretenu avec de hauts responsables irakiens pour faire le point sur les opérations militaires visant à reprendre à l'EI la ville de Tikrit. Cette campagne implique plus de 20'000 hommes. «Daech (acronyme arabe de l'EI, NDLR) sera battu», a-t-il assuré.

Sa visite coïncide avec le lancement par les forces kurdes lundi d'une autre offensive, dans le secteur de la ville pétrolière de Kirkouk (nord). Destinée à accroître la pression sur les derniers bastions de l'EI à l'est du fleuve Tigre, cette attaque est appuyée par des frappes aériennes de la coalition internationale antidjihadistes dirigée par Washington.

Pas de «tapis de bombes»

Le général Dempsey a rallié Bagdad en provenance du Golfe, où il a effectué dimanche une visite sur le porte-avions français «Charles de Gaulle», engagé dans la coalition internationale.

Lors de cette visite, le plus haut gradé américain avait déclaré que la coalition ne prévoit pas d'accélérer ses frappes aériennes contre l'EI. «Larguer un tapis de

bombes sur l'Irak n'est pas la solution», avait-il dit.

«Nous avons la responsabilité d'être très précis dans l'usage de notre puissance aérienne», a expliqué le général Dempsey, assurant qu'augmenter le rythme des raids accentuerait les risques pour les populations civiles, ce qui pourrait alimenter en retour la propagande djihadiste.

La semaine dernière, le général Dempsey avait indiqué que la défaite de l'EI à Tikrit n'était toutefois qu'une question de temps. Quelques centaines de djihadistes y font face à environ 23'000 soldats et miliciens irakiens.

Réconciliation avec les sunnites

Lundi, il a aussi insisté sur la volonté du gouvernement de Bagdad de se réconcilier avec les sunnites, méfiants envers les forces de sécurité. L'EI a profité du ressentiment de cette population vis-à-vis des gouvernements majoritairement chiïtes de ces dernières années pour effectuer sa percée en Irak.

Des membres de tribus sunnites sont accusés d'avoir participé au massacre de centaines de jeunes soldats irakiens chiïtes en 2014. L'offensive sur Tikrit a été présentée comme une occasion de se venger par le leader des Unités de mobilisation populaire, une force paramilitaire principalement constituée de miliciens chiïtes. Mais les responsables militaires ont depuis publiquement appelé leurs hommes à la retenue.

Résistance de l'EI

Une semaine après le début de la bataille de Tikrit, les autorités irakiennes n'ont encore évoqué aucun bilan. Mais elles ont fait état d'une résistance de l'EI dans cette cité.

Sur la route entre Bagdad et Mossoul à 160 kilomètres de la capitale, elle est la plus grande ville du 'califat' autoproclamé par l'EI. Elle avait été prise par le groupe djihadiste en juin dès les premiers jours de leur fulgurante percée en Irak. Sa population est majoritairement sunnite.

Selon l'ONU, près de 30'000 personnes ont par ailleurs été déplacées par les combats autour de Tikrit. Certains ont rejoint des camps à Samarra, l'autre grande ville de la province de Salahedine.

Protéger le patrimoine

De leur côté, les autorités irakiennes ont appelé dimanche la coalition internationale à intervenir pour protéger le patrimoine archéologique vandalisé par des djihadistes, notamment des sculptures préislamiques du musée de Mossoul, les cités antiques de Nimroud et Hatra (nord). Une idée à laquelle le général Dempsey s'est montré favorable lundi à Bagdad.

Le secrétaire général de la Ligue arabe, Nabil al-Arabi, a lui souligné lundi depuis Le Caire «le besoin pressant pour une force militaire arabe» afin de combattre «les groupes terroristes».

Son adjoint avait annoncé le 3 mars que le lancement d'une force militaire arabe serait étudiée lors du sommet annuel de la Ligue prévu les 28 et 29 mars à Charm el-Cheikh.

(ats)

<http://www.20min.ch/>

Italy

ISIS's Next Crusade: Italy

FEBRUARY 28, 2015



Officers with the Italian Polizio dello Stato stand guard on Capitoline Hill in Rome. Italy has deployed an additional 500 police around sensitive sites in the country in response to terror threats from ISIS. WINSTON ROSS FOR NEWSWEEK

The last time the Islamic State (ISIS) aimed its grisly propaganda machine at Italy, Rome responded with a collective shrug. In August, when the Italian press reported that the jihadist group was targeting Pope Francis, the Vatican considered it [“nothing serious.”](#) The pontiff fired the head of the Swiss Guard ([apparently for being “too strict”](#)) and continued to move freely about the continent without his bulletproof “Pope-mobile.”

“There is no particular concern in the Vatican,” Reverend Federico Lombardi S.J. told the Catholic News Agency. Authorities in Rome seemed equally unconcerned.

Today, the Italian government is taking the threat from the caliphate much more seriously—and perhaps with good reason. In October, the ISIS magazine *Da-biq* [published](#) a cover with the jihadist group’s black flying above St. Peter’s Square. The article, “The Failed Crusade,” called for a war against the Catholic Church. Earlier this month, ISIS released a chilling video showing the beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians on a Libyan beach. The camera then cut to a militant pointing his knife at Italy and promising to [“conquer Rome, by Allah’s permission.”](#) And last week, an ISIS-affiliated Twitter account promised homosexuals would soon be tossed from Italy’s [“Leaning tower of Pizza.”](#)

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Over the past few months, Italian authorities have rushed to prepare in case the threats are real. Shortly after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris, Italy and Albania established a joint terrorism task force to train police officers and establish an anti-terrorism database. Italian security chiefs also installed 500 soldiers at sites around the country, with plans to add up to 4,800 more. And two weeks ago, Italy's cabinet proposed new penalties aimed at terrorists. Among them: prison sentences of up to six years for those convicted of recruiting jihadists and the ability to revoke passports of suspected militants.



Officers stand guard outside the Pantheon in Rome.

Security experts and sources in the Italian Secret Service tell *Newsweek* that Rome is newly worried ISIS has infiltrated their country. Not only do they suspect that dozens of jihadists who fought in Iraq and Syria have since returned home to Italy, they're afraid the terrorists could be hiding among thousands of people arriving here on boats from war-torn Libya. (Some of these migrants are Libyan citizens; others are passing through the country from Iraq and sub-Saharan Africa).

Since the fall of Muammar el-Qaddafi in 2011, Libya has descended into chaos, giving rise to warring militias, some of whom are loyal to ISIS. "We find ourselves facing a country [Libya] with a vast territory and failed institutions, and that has potentially grave consequences not only for us but for the stability and sustainability of the transition processes in neighboring African states," Italian foreign minister Paolo Gentiloni told the country's parliament last week. "The time at our disposal is

not infinite and is in danger of running out soon.”

‘They Are Bullies’

Over the past four years, Libya’s civil war—and the number of people fleeing it—have overwhelmed the European Union, especially Italy. A former Italian colony, Libya lies only 109 miles south of the island of Lampedusa and 300 miles south of Sicily. As many as 500 newcomers arrive on those islands each day from across Africa. Some are seeking better economic prospects; others say they’re refugees, fleeing for their lives. Thousands have died along the way as overloaded boats sank in the Mediterranean.

The Italian Navy responded with Mare Nostrum, a fleet of ships dispatched to find these migrants at sea, scoop them out of the dangerous boats and transport them safely to Italy, where they’re moved inland into camps. These ships saved as many as 170,000 people from sinking vessels last year, a 66 percent increase compared to 2013. But in November, Italy ended Mare Nostrum; Italians weren’t happy about the program’s cost (roughly \$10 million a month) or the influx of newcomers. They also felt the E.U. wasn’t providing sufficient resources to help with the rescue effort. Brussels responded with Operation Triton, which is aimed at securing the E.U.’s borders, not at rescuing people or stemming the tide of new arrivals. The ships used for Triton are much smaller than those employed for Mare Nostrum, and there are far fewer of them. Since the Italian program ended, hundreds of migrants have died trying to cross into Italy.

It’s hard to say how many hiding among these immigrants could be terrorists or ISIS sympathizers. The country isn’t at the top of ISIS’s list of enemies, and the Islamic State seems to view Italy more as a launching pad for future attacks in other countries, such as France. But as a “nation signed with the blood of the cross,” as ISIS [militants said in the video from Libya](#), counterterrorism experts believe it’s folly to underestimate jihadists’ eagerness to murder Italians, or other Westerners in the country.

The threat of terrorism here ([and a riot in Rome by Dutch soccer hooligans](#)) explains why the government has flooded its streets with cops recently. Perhaps nowhere is the increased police presence more evident than in Rome, home to the Vatican, the Colosseum and St. Peter’s Basilica. I walked the city Monday and found officers at nearly every major site.



An officer with the Italian Vigili police force offers directions to a tourist near the Spanish Steps in Rome. WINSTON ROSS FOR NEWSWEEK

Yet most Italians don't seem particularly concerned about ISIS. In response to last week's "Pizza" threat on Twitter, some took to social media and mocked the terrorists with the hashtag "We_are_Coming_O_Rome," a reference to another typo'd tweet from the ISIS account. The popular hashtag served up funny travel tips, like this one: "Don't fall for the 'jump the line!' offers at the Vatican; it's a scam. Just wait your turn like everyone else." In a recent national poll by the European Observatory on Security, only 1.3 percent of Italians listed "terrorism" as their greatest concern, behind unemployment, corruption, the economy and taxes. Only "environmental degradation" scored lower.

"You have to laugh [at ISIS], because they are bullies," Francesco Borgonovo, news editor at the Italian daily *Libero*, told me. "But you also have to increase the measures against terrorism in Italy, beginning with the first threat: immigration. It is completely out of control."

Turning Europe Into Hell

The Italian government isn't laughing at ISIS. Last week I spoke with Sabrina Magris, president of the International University School of Rome and Florence, which offers counterterrorism and hostage negotiation training to various governments around the world. She told me Italian officials are increasingly worried about the situation in post-Qaddafi Libya and the influx of terrorists sneaking into Italy. A growing number of Libyan militias have proclaimed their loyalty to ISIS in recent months; in response, Italian intelligence agencies have ramped up their online surveillance of

suspected ISIS supporters.



An officer patrols near the Marcus Aurelius statue on Capitoline Hill in Rome. WINSTON ROSS FOR NEWSWEEKSift through enough ISIS propaganda and you can see why Rome is on edge. Italy “has a long coast overlooking the southern Crusader countries which could be reached using small boats,” pro-ISIS blogger Abu Irhim al-Libi [wrote last month](#). “If ISIS can successfully intermingle with those fleeing the Libyan coast en route for Europe,” al-Libi added, “this could turn life in southern European states into hell.”

A source in the Italian Secret Service downplayed this threat, though. The government is far more focused on foreign fighters who arrive via traditional means, he told *Newsweek*, with their papers in order. “Why would terrorists risk their lives to get into Italy on an open boat?” the source said.

No matter how they’re trying to get here, the best way to prevent militants from infiltrating Italy, the source added, is to focus less on electronic eavesdropping and more on deploying personnel throughout Europe to identify potential terrorists. Magris disagrees. While the Italian response is “currently the best we can implement,” thanks to the complexity of the Libyan and migration problems, she says, Italy should heighten its data analysis measures to trip up young ISIS members who aren’t adept at cloaking their messages online. The country should also recruit and deploy younger agents to gather intelligence—especially women, she said, because ISIS is increasingly using them to gather intel abroad.

Now, more than ever before, Italy is focused on counterterrorism, says Marco Lombardi, an associate professor of crisis management at the Catholic University of Sa-

cred Heart. But some politicians in the country are struggling with dissonance, he adds. To avoid offending migrant and refugee sympathizers on the left and to avoid stoking Islamophobes on the right, Italian pols are perhaps a bit too careful when they talk about ISIS. “Italian intelligence is on the spot, and they are monitoring about 50 or 60 foreign fighters,” Lombardi says. But when it comes to policy, elected officials have talked more than they’ve acted, failing to actually implement laws aimed at thwarting terrorists. “This is the highest threat we’ve had in the last 30 years, and while the government is more conscious, there’s a disconnect between what officials are saying and how they act.”

If that gap doesn’t close, Lombardi and others fear Italy could become a new breeding ground for terrorism—or, worse, the next Paris. Perhaps the pope should climb back into that bulletproof car.

— *With Nicholas Farrell in Rome*

<http://www.newsweek.com/>

Pakistan

Analysis: Wrangling persists in listing terror groups

KHURRAM HUSAIN — PUBLISHED 2 days ago



THE government appears to be caught in a wrangle in its attempts to create a list of proscribed terrorist outfits operating in Pakistan. The need to create such a list appears to stem from a combination of international pressure and the requirements of a coherent anti-terror campaign at home.

In late December, the National Counter-Terrorism Authority (Nacta) website carried a list of all proscribed groups in Pakistan, which was updated in early January before being removed from the site by the middle of the month, shortly after the visit by US Secretary of State John Kerry.

But internet is a tricky place, and both lists remain accessible even though by now the Nacta website has been taken down entirely. Some links on the site continue to function, and at least one snapshot of the site as it existed on Dec 27 is available from a web archiving service.

A glance at the contents of both lists, and the context surrounding them, is enough to reveal why they were uploaded only to be removed later.

Also read: [Banning terror groups](#)

The first list contained names of sixty organisations, including Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ), proscribed in 2012, formerly known as the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan, which was proscribed in 2002. Individuals belonging to this group have run for elections from Karachi. This list also contained two names as “enlisted under UNSCR 1267”, which included Al Rashid Trust and Al Akhtar Trust. The Jamaatud Dawah (JuD) is listed separately under a category “Enlisted under observation”. It is not clear what “under observation” means in this matter.

By early January, a second and updated list had appeared on the Nacta website. The updated version named twelve organisations as “enlisted under UNSCR 1267”. They were: Taliban, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Umma Tameer-e-Nau, Jamaatud Dawa (JuD), Al Akhtar Trust, Al Rashid Trust, Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami, Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation (FiF), Haji Khairullah Haji Israr Money Exchange, Roshan Money Exchange and Rahat Ltd.

The expanded list appears to have become controversial very quickly, since it was taken down days after being uploaded. The presence of names like JuD and FiF, the latter being the welfare arm of the former, is said to be the source of the controversy.

Know more: [Pakistan's banned organisations list to match UN blacklist](#)

The first list seems to have been generated during the formation of the National Internal Security Policy (Nisp), which was placed before the National Assembly in Feb 2014. It was not made public, but press reports carrying its contents were linked to the Nacta website back then.

Shortly after the second list was uploaded on the Nacta website, the US State Department congratulated Pakistan on successfully banning the Haqqani network, prompting questions in Pakistan because the ban was never formally announced.

The list was removed shortly after John Kerry’s visit, and the controversy surrounding it began in earnest only then.

On Jan 19, the minister for defence was quoted in press reports as saying there was “no reason to ban JuD” since it was a “charity organisation” only. It was not clear why the defence minister should be injecting himself into the affair since it is not part of his portfolio.

But on Jan 22, the Foreign Office spokesperson confirmed that JuD had been banned, and in response to a question said that it was her understanding that a ban would mean “close scrutiny” of the group’s bank accounts. In fact, for a ban to be compliant with the UN Resolution 1267, it would require a complete freeze of all assets maintained by the group in Pakistan along with assets of all groups known to a front organisation, such as the FiF.

The same day, media reports sourced to unnamed intelligence and interior ministry officials confirmed that a ban had been placed on these groups. But days later, an additional secretary of the interior ministry was reported to have told a Senate committee that JuD was “under observation” and that he was not sure of any ban on it, or on the Haqqani network. It is not clear what keeping a group “under observation” really entails.

Days later, on Jan 25, JuD held a large rally in Karachi at which Hafiz Saeed, the group’s leader, dismissed all talk of a ban on his group, saying the UN curbs are six years old and the words of the Foreign Office spokesperson were being exaggerated in the media.

In early February, two US Congressmen sent a letter to Mr Kerry, urging “travel restrictions, suspending portions of assistance, and sanctioning Pakistani officials that maintain relationships with designated terrorist groups”. The letter indicated an escalation in the pressure being brought to bear on the government to take action in banning the groups listed by the UN, and to act on the ban.

The matter appeared to end with this ambiguity until late in February when the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) reviewed Pakistan’s compliance with its AML/CFT (Anti-Money Laundering / Countering Terrorist Financing) framework. The intergovernmental body certified that Pakistan has successfully addressed the strategic deficiencies in its AML/CFT framework and is no longer under monitoring by the group. But the statement added that Pakistan will have to “address the full range of AML/CFT issues identified in its mutual evaluation report, in particular, fully implementing UNSC Resolution 1267”.

The special emphasis placed on “fully implementing UNSC Resolution 1267” means the ambiguity surrounding the banning of JuD and its affiliates, as well as the Haqqani network needs to be cleared up for full compliance with the FATF’s guidelines.

This week, the Pakistani ambassador nodded towards these lingering doubts by saying a ban on the Haqqani network is “in the works”.

For full implementation of the UN Resolution, a ban would need to be followed by an asset freeze. This could be significant given the scale of welfare operations that FiF has begun to undertake around Pakistan, including an ambulance service in three cities.

How does the government intend to fight terrorist groups on its soil if it has such difficulty in even naming them? And failure to name these groups has ramifications for the country’s financial system. The pressure to move on the ban is unlikely to dissipate in days to come. The ambiguity that the government prefers to maintain in dealing with groups and individuals proscribed by the United Nations cannot continue for long.

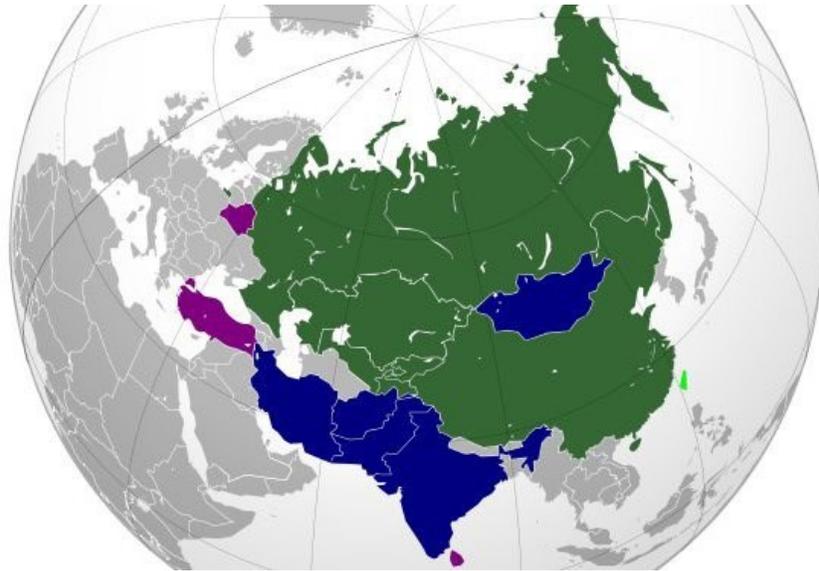
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Turkey

TURKEY'S SCO PERSPECTIVE: SECURITY AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS – ANALYSIS

MARCH 14, 2015



In recent years, the Turkish foreign policy environment has started to discuss the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in a more extensive manner. This increase in discussion is certainly influenced by Turkish President Erdogan's appeal in the highest level to his Russian counterpart, President Putin, for Turkey to join the SCO. However, the primary and most practical reason for Turkey to be discussing the SCO in regards to foreign policy is that Ankara, keeping its NATO membership and EU candidacy, began to develop its relations with the organisation. The motives behind this new approach by Ankara are based on pragmatic concerns as well as changes in the theoretical framework of its foreign policy implementation. If one was to look at the activism in Turkish foreign policy, especially in the period between 2005 and 2012, it can be easily observed that Ankara has made considerable achievements in its diplomatic entrepreneurship in many different regions of the world. To illustrate, after obtaining an observer status in the African Union in 2005, Turkey was accepted by the union as the strategic partner of the continent in 2008. Ankara also launched out a new strategic dialogue partnership mechanism with the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in September 2008. To demonstrate efforts in a different direction, in October 2009, Turkey, with other founding members of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, set up The Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council), an international, intergovernmental organization concerning regional, economic and sociocultural projects. Furthermore, as a new diplomatic outreach to Southeast Asia, Turkey established institutional rela-

tions with the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN) after a deal on cooperation was signed in July 2010.

Turkey's redefining its relations with the SCO came after these steps, which can be examined within the confines of the multilateral foreign policy in that period. In 2012, by the summit of leaders of the SCO, Turkey was granted dialogue partner status in the organisation, which was followed by a ceremony of in which Turkey signed a memorandum on the 26th April 2013 in Almaty. At this point, it should also be underlined that the shift in the world's geopolitical and economic center of gravity from Europe and North America to the Asia-Pacific region, and first to China, has also facilitated the update of Turkey's Asia strategy and engaged Turkey in regional organisations in a more active role. In accordance with this renewed Asia strategy, Turkey is most likely seeking a dialogue partner, an observer, a full membership or strategic partnership status in these organizations. By the same token, as a domestic factor, the multi-vectored foreign policy of Turkey was backed with political stability by an absolute majority of the governing party in the parliament and the improvement in economic indicators with an average annual GDP growth of over 5 percent in that period.

In this context, the SCO presents a window of opportunity for Turkey's further economic development and foreign trade volume from a pragmatic win-win point of view. Last year, 29 percent of Turkey's total imports originated in SCO countries (including the observers and dialogue partners) with respect to just 16 percent in 2003. Again in 2014, Turkey's total imports from SCO countries reached almost 70 billion dollars whereas its total exports to the group members were approximately 17 billion dollars. This level of economic advancement was actually achieved while some of the SCO countries, including Russia and Iran, were suffering from Western sanctions. Thus, the high economic potential for cooperation between Turkey and the SCO is clear. In contrast, from 2003 to 2014, the EU's share in Turkey's total imports declined from 51 percent to 36 percent despite the new members in the union that appeared after 2003. A similar trend can also be seen in Turkey's export orientation. EU countries had a 58 percent share in Turkey's total exports in 2003, whereas this ratio significantly decreased to 43 percent in 2014. The SCO countries had a ratio of 6.5 percent of Turkey's total exports in 2003 with respect to the small rise to 10.5 percent that occurred in the last year.

Even though the increase in Turkish exports to the SCO countries is not shown in significant amounts, the perspective of the relations paves the way for more trading activities, taking into account the complementary characters of the economies in the organisation. The ongoing negotiations between Turkey and its partners in the Eurasian Economic Union on the issue of creating free trade zones may actually accelerate the trend of the economic orientation of Turkey to Asia. Also, Ankara is interested in establishing free trade zones within the SCO; however, it needs to work on this issue yet. Moreover, Turkey's unique geographical location between Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa presents an opportunity for a faster

realization of the Silk Road Economic Belt project of China. This project has an inclusive, but not exclusionary, policy with respect to Turkey, where the civilizational components of the historical Silk Road intersect.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that despite the call, if not pressure, that maintains from Turkey's NATO partners and EU officials to join the economic sanctions campaign against Russia over the Ukrainian crisis, Turkey holds off implementing the embargo. Indeed, this attitude gives one more chance to both sides for trust-building measures within the SCO for future projects. In addition to this fact, the dramatic improvement of economic links in the last decade between Turkey and the Republic of Tatarstan as a federal subject of Russia is also another basis and can be taken as a model for confidence-building measures in the SCO. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the changing security threat perceptions of Russia vis-à-vis Turkey in a more positive way, mostly through economic relations, opened the doors of Tatarstan for Turkish businessmen and investments. Nowadays, Turkey is Tatarstan's main foreign trade partner with more than one billion dollars in direct investments in the region's economy. In fact, a similar constructive approach can also be applied between Turkey and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China within the framework of the SCO. As Chinese scholars most likely prefer to see the SCO through a perspective of free trade, but not via an integrationist project, this kind of approach will serve the interests of all countries in the organisation, not just Turkey's.

Taking these possible pragmatic results into account, the security dynamics in the wider Eurasian continent also require Turkey to have more direct links and cooperation with the SCO. The three evils – terrorism, radicalism and separatism – are also common threats for Turkey in its own periphery. It is essential that Ankara establishes high-level contacts and cooperation with a multilateral dialogue through regional organisations. This necessity is made especially evident by three specific occurrences: (1) ISIL terrorism in Syria and Iraq as a direct threat and danger to Turkey's own territorial integrity; (2) The possible falling of Afghanistan and some of the Central Asian countries into a spiral of political instability and radicalism; (3) Rising separatism in many of the countries in the region. The efforts of the western block are not sufficient enough to overcome these threats. It is estimated that more than 4 thousand militants from Central Asian countries are fighting on the side of ISIL in Syria and Iraq, whereas terrorist groups from many other countries also exist in the region.

On the other hand, Afghanistan's prosperity in all political, security, economic and sociocultural spheres is as much necessary for its people as for the entire region. Turkey is one of the 4 countries among the US, Germany and Italy that left its soldiers in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of NATO troops in the post-2014 era under the legal framework of the Resolute Support Mission. At the same time, Turkey is the only country in this mission that increased the number of soldiers in Afghanistan, which was mainly due to the nature of Turkish assistance to Afghanistan.

While avoiding combat missions in Afghanistan, Turkey contributes to the training of the national Afghan police and military force. Moreover, Ankara implements Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Afghanistan through the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA). The utilization of soft power elements in Afghanistan by Turkey is mainly realized in the fields of education, medical services, and the water purification and transportation infrastructure. Continuing with humanitarian assistance efforts, Turkey concentrates on capacity-building in the public administration of this country.

According to TIKA statistics, Turkey realized 806 projects between 2005 and 2014 in Afghanistan – 240 of which were in education and 214 in medical fields. Turkey provided an opportunity for almost 100,000 Afghan students to have a proper education, building 83 new schools in the country. On top of that, Turkish medical services have already reached five million Afghan people.

As a regional dimension of this issue, Afghanistan currently needs more humanitarian aid, as well as aid to help with economic integration with its neighbors. The long-term self-development of Afghanistan and diminishment of radical trends in the society can be built upon by the new, qualified generation – a fact that should be taken into consideration by the SCO. Turkey already has enough experience with this issue in Afghanistan, which is providing a possible new area of contribution on behalf of Turkey to the SCO.

In addition to this possible non-military contribution from Ankara to the SCO, Turkey is also preparing to redefine its military cooperation with the members of the organisation. Turkish military has already begun negotiations to buy Chinese long-range, anti-missile defense systems with its counterpart. Ankara is seeking a technology transfer from China for the missile systems. If the deal is to be realized, it will be possible to talk about a new era in Turkish-Chinese military cooperation. Turkey was the first NATO member that had deals on several military technical issues with Russia a long time ago. If the contract with China is signed, Ankara will also be the first NATO member that realizes such a significant rapprochement with a non-NATO global power, in terms of security, that can have direct, significant effects on Turkey's relations with the western alliance. However, it should not be forgotten that this issue also gives an opportunity for political leverage to Ankara in its policies in the Middle East with respect to NATO/EU relations. Thus, it would be a mistake to say that the economic orientation of Turkey to the SCO, which has mainly pragmatic motivations, directly accompanies its foreign policy shift to the east. It should be noted that Turkey is not yet ready to abandon its western orientation and EU candidacy for a return to full membership with the SCO.

To conclude, Turkey's possible contributions to the regional security architecture and economic prosperity within the SCO need hard work in themselves, especially taking into account Turkey's strong security relations with the western block and its ambitions for economic diversification with other parts of the world. In that con-

text, the converging interests of Turkey and the SCO countries are also going to have direct, positive effects on relations between the SCO and the west itself.

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<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

United Kingdom

Analysis: 'Jihadi John' won't have the same impact unmasked

March 1, 2015



This undated image from a video released Friday, Oct. 3, 2014, by Islamic State militants purports to show "Jihadi John," who is suspected in several beheadings. He was identified last week as Mohammed Emwazi.

UNCREDITED — AP

LONDON — As "Jihadi John," he was a terrifying figure, his identity concealed by a black mask, his threatening tone backed up by his oversize, serrated knife and his willingness to use it in the name of Islamic State and its self-declared caliphate.

His professional-looking videos began with a political rant and ended with his victims lying dead at his feet, severed heads cupped in the sands of Syria. He seemed both judge and executioner, savoring each fresh kill.

After the Sept. 11 attacks on the U.S., many believed that terrorists would turn to crude weapons of mass destruction to attack cities. Few predicted that a man with a knife and a video production team could have such an impact using a medieval technique.

Now that he has been exposed as Mohammed Emwazi, the tall man with the British accent and mocking tone is no longer a mystery. He is revealed as one more furious young Londoner, in this case a well-educated, middle-class jihadi in his mid-20s who turned against his adopted country after he moved to Britain from Kuwait as a boy.

His unmasking may well have reduced his usefulness to the cause.

For one thing, with his identity known, and the global distribution of pictures of him looking slightly goofy in an ill-fitting Pittsburgh Pirates baseball cap, Emwazi may become less sinister to viewers, less able to send chills up the spines of people who abhor Islamic State's claim to be killing civilians in the name of Islam.

If he kills again on camera, the element of surprise will be gone and the reaction may well be, "Oh, him again."

Also, now that authorities know who he is, there is little doubt he will become the target of a drone attack if the U.S. or Britain can learn his precise whereabouts. The pressure on him could make him less valuable to Islamic State militants – perhaps even a liability.

Magnus Ranstorp, a terrorism specialist with the Swedish National Defense College, said Emwazi can be expected to play a reduced role in the organization because every time he speaks on a mobile phone he risks having his location pinpointed, sparking drone fire that could kill him and others. Ranstorp said the identification of Emwazi also gives the public hope that he will be brought to justice.

"It's quite important for families of the victims," he said. "They know where to focus. They know there is one particular person who has been named who authorities will focus on and who will live for the rest of his life knowing that every day he will face a possible drone attack. Now that he is known, he may not be as menacing as he once was."

Now that details about his personal trajectory have begun to emerge, Emwazi becomes the stuff of parliamentary inquiries: How was he radicalized? Why didn't the security services determine he was a mortal threat and do something to keep him from getting to Syria?

Emwazi is perhaps the most chilling exemplar of the radicalization trend that is gaining pace not just in Britain but also in France, Belgium, Denmark and other countries in western Europe.

He went to Syria early, in 2013, in the vanguard of the British jihadi movement, before the Islamic State militants seized territory and issued a call for other likeminded people – including girls and young women – to join its ranks in Syria and Iraq.

There is circumstantial evidence suggesting Emwazi tried earlier to link up with al-Shabaab terrorists in Somalia but was thwarted in part by a British spy who tried unsuccessfully to recruit him into the secret service.

Since then, the call to jihad has intensified, galvanized in part by easy access to Internet sites that depict the Islamic State's territory as a religious utopia governed by Shariah law.

Britons watched helplessly this week as three teenage schoolgirls who had run away from their homes in London were reported by police to be in Syria, apparently linked up with Islamic State extremists as potential "jihadi brides."

Now al-Shabaab is making threats of its own, warning that the two big shopping malls in London – as well as the famous department stores on Oxford Street – are considered targets for terrorist attacks along with the Mall of America in the U.S.

Nearly half of British Muslims surveyed in a BBC poll published this past week say the British public is becoming less tolerant of Muslims. At the same time, the UKIP political party is making gains by taking a stand against increased immigration.

This increased polarization was clearly one of the goals of the Islamic State campaign that used Emwazi's familiar London accent as a potent reminder to Britons that the enemy was in their midst: not some far-off person speaking Arabic, but a homeboy from their streets.

"The fact that he appears like a relatively ordinary young British resident is disquieting," said John Gearson, professor of national security studies at King's College London. But "the de-mystification of this individual reduces the propaganda effect for Islamic State. He's just a murderer now."

Still, if Emwazi's moment has passed, Islamic State militants – with their strong grasp of how to use social networking and video to spread fear – are likely to come up with other ways to shock the public.

Read more here: <http://www.macon.com/>

The Collapse of Order in the Middle East

Remarks to the 23rd Annual Arab-U.S. Policymakers Conference

October 28, 2014

Will Rogers once observed that “when you get into trouble 5,000 miles from home, you’ve got to have been looking for it.” It’s a good deal more than 5,000 miles to Baghdad or Damascus from here. And, boy, have we gotten into trouble!

We are trying to cope with the cumulative consequences of multiple failures. Just about every American project in the Middle East has now come a cropper. There is a new velcro-backed military campaign morale patch commemorating this. It is available through Amazon.com for \$7.45. The patch bears an escutcheon with a logo that, in the interest of decorum, I will not read out. It sounds like Operation Enduring FlusterCluck.

If you’re a Middle East groupie, which your presence here suggests you may be, you need one of these patches for your jacket. It describes what is now the characteristic within-the-Beltway approach to problem solving. If at first we don’t succeed, we do the same thing again harder, with better technology, and at greater expense. The patch provides a cogent — if uncouth — summary of the results of this approach so far this century.



We’re once again down to the wire in our decade-long negotiations with Iran to

cap its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. There is no evidence that sanctions have had any effect at all on Iran's policies. Maybe that's because it doesn't have the nuclear weapons program our politicians say it has. Our intelligence agencies tell us there's no evidence it does. No matter. Iran's mastery of the full nuclear fuel cycle and its development of missiles could give it "nuclear latency" — the future capacity to weaponize nuclear materials on short notice. The deadline for the latest and likely final round of negotiations is now only 31 days away. The failure to reach agreement could drive Iran to decide to build a bomb sooner rather than later. Still, those in the region against whom such weapons would be deployed seem to want the talks to fail. Agreement with Iran would, after all, open an ominous path to better relations between it and the West.

The half-century-long US-managed effort to achieve acceptance for the Jewish state in its region has meanwhile died of a fatal build-up of glib hypocrisy, sometimes called Netanyahu Syndrome. Despite decades of trying, American diplomacy has also definitely failed to reconcile Palestinians to indefinite existence as disenfranchised captives of Israel's Jewish democracy. The so-called "peace process" will be missed. Eventually there will be an exhibit about it in the museum of diplomatic debacles. In the meantime, politicians will visit its grave at opportune moments. There they will pray, piously, for peace, by which they mean entirely unclear and incompatible things.

The region's leaders were long worried that Israel's abuse of its captive Arab Muslim population would radicalize their own citizens and destabilize their societies. Now that this radicalization has actually occurred, Israel's cruelty to the Palestinians has become just another outrage that Muslim extremists cite to justify terrorist reprisals against the West. Fixing the Israel-Palestine conflict would no longer call off the anti-American terrorism and wars of religion it helped catalyze. This does not remove the Israel-Palestine issue as a motivator for anti-American terrorism but, in the years to come, you'll hear a lot about why curing injustices in the Holy Land need no longer be a concern for American diplomacy.



There has been a not-entirely-unrelated discovery that, in the contemporary Middle East, elections — at least the first round of them — invariably empower Islamists. This has dialed down the American passion for free elections in Arab societies. Think Palestine and Egypt. The revelation that anarchy also empowers Islamists is now cutting into American enthusiasm for regime removal. Think Iraq, Libya, and Syria. But as Americans trim our ideological ambitions, the so-called “Islamic State” — which is as Islamic as the Ku Klux Klan is Christian so I’ll call them *Da`ish* — is demonstrating the enduring potential of religious fanaticism to kill men, maim children, and enslave women in the name of God.

The United States and many NATO countries are now engaged against *Da`ish* from the air, with a bit of help from a few Arab air forces. So far, however, the Shiite coalition of Iran, Hezbollah, and the Iraqi and Syrian governments has been and remains the main force arrayed against *Da`ish* on the ground outside the Kurdish domains. This has exposed the awkward fact that Iran has the same enemies as the United States, if not the same friends. In the region that coined the adage, “my enemy’s enemy is my friend,” everyone is waiting to see what — if anything — this might mean. For now at least, *Da`ish* is a uniquely brutal force blessed with an enemy divided into antagonistic and adamantly uncooperative coalitions.

Da`ish has been out to make itself an irresistibly attractive nuisance by committing dramatic atrocities and publicizing them to an easily vexed Western world. It is battling to energize the disaffected among the Islamic faithful against the West and to cleanse the Arab world of Western influences. It wants to erase the states that Western colonialism imposed after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It regards them as illegitimate entities that could not survive without continuing support from the West.

Da`ish judges that both its policies and its narrative have been validated by the American and European response to its provocations. The major contributors to the US-led military coalition opposing *Da`ish* are the former colonial powers. These are Western, predominantly Christian nations, some of them with reputations in the region for recent sacrilegious mocking of Muslim piety. Token participation in the US-led bombing campaign in Syria by the air forces of Jordan and some Gulf Arab states fits easily into the *Da`ish* narrative. *Da`ish* portrays those arrayed against it as a new Crusader army with Arab lackeys attempting to restore the broken framework of Sykes-Picot.

In this context, Western-led military intervention is not just an inadequate response to the threat from *Da`ish*. It is a preposterously counterproductive response. It is as if the Ottoman Sultanate had attempted to deal with Europe’s Thirty Years War by condemning Christian atrocities and treating them as a military problem to be resolved by the intervention of Muslim Janissaries.

Admittedly, the United States cannot escape responsibility for policies that helped birth *Da`ish* in Iraq and mature its fighting forces in Syria. The U.S. invasion of Iraq

kicked off an orgy of intolerance and sectarian killing that has now taken at least 700,000 lives in Iraq and Syria and traumatized both, while threatening the existence of the other states created by Sykes-Picot a century ago. The rise of Da`ish is a consequence of anarchy brought on by Western attempts at regime change, but it is ultimately a deviant cult within Islam. Its immediate objective is to destroy the existing order in the Muslim world in the name of Islam. Its doctrines cannot be credibly rebutted by non-Muslims. The threat it poses requires a Muslim-led politico-military response. A US-dominated bombing campaign with token allied participation cannot kill it. The United States is well supplied with F-15s, 16s, and drones, but it lacks the religious credentials to refute Da`ish as a moral perversion of Islam. Arab air forces are helpful. Arab religious engagement and moral leadership are essential to contain and defeat Da`ish.

Da`ish and the 15,000 foreign jihadis it has attracted are an existential threat to Arab societies and a potential menace to Muslim societies everywhere. Da`ish poses no comparable threat to the United States. Some Americans argue therefore that Da`ish doesn't matter. A few suggest that, because tight oil and shale gas production is making North America energy self-sufficient, what happens in the Middle East as a whole should also no longer matter much to Americans. But the Persian Gulf is where international oil prices are set. If you doubt this, ask an American tight oil producer what's happening in today's energy markets and why. Without stability in West Asia, the global economy is also unstable.

Da`ish aspires not only to destroy the states of the Mashriq — the Arab East — but to conquer their territories and use their resources to mount attacks on the United States, European countries, Russia, and China. It wants to get its hands on the world's major energy reserves. Its depredations are a current threat only to stability in West Asia, but its recruitment efforts are as global as its aspirations. Quite aside from the responsibility the United States bears for creating the conditions in which this dangerous cult could be born and flourish, Da`ish threatens American interests abroad today. It promises to threaten American domestic tranquility tomorrow. It sees inflicting harm on the West as a central element of its mission.

For all these reasons, Da`ish cannot be ignored by the United States or other nations outside the Middle East. It requires a response from us. But Da`ish must be actively countered first and foremost by those it targets within the region, not by the United States and its Western allies. This means that our response must be measured, limited, and calculated to avoid relieving regional players of the primary responsibility for protecting themselves from the menace to them that Da`ish represents.

Muslims — whether Shiite or Sunni or Arab, Kurd, Persian, or Turk — now have an expanding piece of Hell in their part of the Earth, a growing foulness near the center of Islam. It is almost certainly a greater threat to all of them than they have ever posed to each other. Da`ish will not be contained and defeated unless the nations and sects on its regional target list — Shiite and Sunni alike — all do their part. We

should not delude ourselves. The obstacles to this happening are formidable.

Virtually every group now fighting or being victimized in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon has engaged in or been accused of terrorism by the others. Sectarian violence continues to stoke hatred in the region. The religious animosities between Shi'ites and Sunnis are more intense than ever. The geopolitical rivalry between Iran and the Gulf Arabs remains acute. The political resentments between Turks, Kurds, and Arabs and between Arabs and Persians are entrenched. Each describes the other as part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Unity of command, discipline, and morale are the keys to both military and political success. Da'ish has all three. Its opponents do not. Some are dedicated to the defense of Shiite privilege. Others assign priority to dislodging Shiite or secular authority. Some insist on regime change. Others seek to prevent it. A few support Islamist democratic movements. Others seek to suppress and eradicate them. Some fear terrorism from the victims and enemies of Da'ish more than they fear Da'ish itself. Most treat opposing Da'ish as a secondary strategic objective or a means of enlisting American and other foreign support in the achievement of other priorities, not as their primary aim.

With few exceptions, the states of the region have habitually looked to outside powers for leadership as well as firepower and manpower with which to respond to major security challenges. Despite vast imports of foreign weapons systems, confidence in outside backing has enabled the countries in the region to assume that they could avoid ultimate responsibility for their own defense, relying instead on their ability to summon their American and European security partners in times of crisis. But only a coalition with a strong Muslim identity can hope to contain and shrink Da'ish.

There is no such coalition at present. Every actor in the region has an agenda that is only partially congruent with the Da'ish-related agendas of others. And every actor focuses on the reasons it cannot abide or work with some or all of the others, not on exploring the points it has in common with them.

The United States has the power-projection and war-fighting capabilities to back a Muslim-led effort against Da'ish, but lacks the political credibility, leadership credentials, and diplomatic connections to organize one. Since this century began, America has administered multiple disappointments to its allies and friends in the Middle East, while empowering their and our adversaries. Unlike the Gulf Arabs, Egypt, and Turkey, Washington does not have diplomatic relations with Tehran. Given its non-Muslim identity, solidarity with Israel, and recent history in the Fertile Crescent, the United States cannot hope to unite the region's Muslims against Da'ish. Da'ish is a Muslim insurgency. A coalition led by inhibited foreign forces, built on papered-over differences, and embodying hedged commitments will not defeat such an insurgency with or without boots on the ground.

There is an ineluctable requirement for Muslim leadership and strategic vision from within the region. Without it, the existing political geography of the Arab world — not just the map drawn by Sykes-Picot — faces progressive erosion and ultimate collapse. States will be pulled down, to be succeeded by warlords, as is already happening in Iraq and Syria. Degenerate and perverted forms of Islam will threaten prevailing Sunni and Shi`a religious dispensations, as Da`ish now does.

Where is regional leadership with acceptable credentials to come from? The Sunni Arab states of the Gulf will not accept guidance from Iran, nor will Iran accept it from them. The alternatives are Egypt and Turkey. Both are partially estranged American allies. Their relations with each other are strained. But, any strategy that accepts the need for leadership from within the region must focus on them. They are the only plausible candidates for the role. But both are problematic.

Egypt is internally stressed and dependent on support from Gulf Arab partners whose main objectives are to carry out regime change in Damascus, push back Shi`ite dominance in Iraq, and contain Iran. The Egyptians themselves put the suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas ahead of dislodging Mr. Assad or defeating Da`ish. Turkey is more eager to remove Assad and roll back Kurdish factions associated with its longstanding domestic terrorism problem than it is to contain Da`ish. It does not want problems with Iran. Until the governments in Cairo and Ankara conclude that containing and defeating Da`ish deserves priority over other foreign policy objectives, neither will assume a leadership role in the struggle against it. In time, they may come to that conclusion. But, in the meantime, the fact that none of our major security partners in the region agrees with American priorities suggests that we are right to proceed with caution.

To be effective, any American strategy for dealing with the menace of Islamist terrorism of the sort Da`ish represents must not only find regional partners to support, it must address the pernicious legacies of past U.S. policies. These include the legacy of the botched “peace process” in the Holy Land and the more general problems inherent in moral hazard, the confusion of values with interests, and the illusion that military power is a substitute for diplomacy.

The Israel-Palestine issue remains a substantial burden on the effectiveness of U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East. As far as I know, the United States has never killed a single Palestinian. Americans have just given Israel the arms, money, and political protection it has needed to oppress and massacre Palestinians. In the region, we are not seen as having much of an alibi for our role in fostering Palestinian suffering. Willingness to give us the benefit of the doubt and time to produce justice for the Palestinians expired forever along with the US-led “peace process” we had claimed for decades was going to accomplish this and cited as a reason for the world to leave Palestinian self-determination to the Israelis.

The next non-violent phase of the struggle for Palestinian liberation from Israeli occupation and dispossession is likely to take place not at the negotiating table but in

the courts of international law and opinion, as well as other venues the United States cannot control. Given the intimacy of American political, economic, cultural, and military relationships with the Jewish settler state in Palestine, there is a strong prospect that the mounting international effort to boycott, sanction, and disinvest from Israel — including especially the Arab lands it seized in 1967 — will directly affect American companies and individuals in ways it has not since the Oslo Accords brought about the suspension of the Arab Boycott of Israel.

More to the point, the Palestinian cause seems certain to prove irresistible to Da`ish as it consolidates and expands its hold on the region, as there is currently every reason to believe it will. After all, Palestine combines the perfect mix of issues for Da`ish — foreign occupation, suppression of Muslims, and interference with worship at important Islamic holy sites. With diplomacy having definitively failed, the Palestinians believe they face a choice between capitulation and violent resistance. Da`ish is reported to be gaining ground as an alternative to more moderate movements, like Hamas. To a majority in the region, continuing Israeli cruelty to Palestinians justifies reprisal not just against Israel but the United States.

Palestinian refugee communities provide a deep reservoir of recruits for terrorist attacks on Israeli and American targets. The growing sympathy for the Palestinian plight in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia offers opportunities to recruit Western cohorts. Assaults on Israel and its American supporters meet every criterion of political constituency-building Da`ish could hope to find.

Israel's right-wing government has inadvertently been doing everything it can to incite Da`ish to focus on the Jewish state. During Israel's recent rubbing of Gaza, its deputy minister of defense threatened Palestinians there with a "Holocaust." Not to be outdone, a senior figure in the HaBeyit HaYehudi party, which is part of the governing coalition in Israel, called for the destruction of "the entire Palestinian people . . . , including its elderly and its women, its cities and its villages, its property and its infrastructure." And a deputy speaker of the Knesset called for the forced depopulation of Gaza.

This brings me to a core issue in U.S. policies in the Middle East: the moral hazard inherent in U.S. unilateralism. Moral hazard is the condition that obtains when one party is emboldened to take risks it would not otherwise take because it knows that another party will shoulder the consequences and bear the costs of failure. US-Israel relations exemplify this problem. American political and legal protection plus subsidies and subventions enable Israel to do whatever it feels like to its Arab neighbors with no concern for the consequences. But the same phenomenon has been at work in Arab approaches to the nuclear disarmament of Iran. If America can be induced to take the lead in handling the Iranian threat, why should anyone in the region try to do anything about it themselves? Similarly, why should any Muslim country rearrange its priorities to deal with Da`ish when it can count on America to act for it? If America thinks it must lead, why not let it do so? But responsible foreign and defense policies begin with self-help, not outsourcing of mili-

tary risks.

U.S. policy should encourage the nations of the Middle East to develop effective political, economic, and military strategies to defend and advance their own interests, not rush to assume responsibility for doing this for them. Part of such a policy adjustment toward emphasizing the primary responsibility of the countries of the region for their own security would involve weighing the opinions of our partners in the region much more heavily in our decisions than they have in since 9/11. Had we listened to our Gulf Arab friends, we would not have invaded Iraq in 2003. Iraq would still be balancing Iran. It would not be in chaos and it would still have a border with Syria. The United States needs to return to respecting the views of regional powers about the appropriate response to regional threats, resisting the impulse to substitute military campaign plans made in Washington for strategies conceived by those with the greatest stake in their success.

The need for restraint extends to refraining from expansive rhetoric about our values or attempting to compel others to conform to them. In practice, we have insisted on democratization only in countries we have invaded or that were otherwise falling apart, as Egypt was during the first of the two “non coups” it suffered. When elections have yielded governments whose policies we oppose, we have not hesitated to conspire with their opponents to overthrow them. But the results of our efforts to coerce political change in the Middle East are not just failure but catastrophic failure. Our policies have nowhere produced democracy. They have instead contrived the destabilization of societies, the kindling of religious warfare, and the installation of dictatorships contemptuous of the rights of religious and ethnic minorities.

Americans used to believe that we could best lead by example. We and those in the Middle East seeking nonviolent change would all be better off if America returned to that tradition and foreswore ideologically motivated intervention. Despite our unparalleled ability to use force against foreigners, the best way to inspire them to emulate us remains showing them that we have our act together. At the moment, we do not.

Finally, we should have learned by now that military might, no matter how impressive, is not in itself transformative. American military power has never been as dominant in the Middle East as in this century. Yet its application has repeatedly proved counterproductive and its influence limited. It shattered rather than reshaped Iraq. It has failed to bring the Taliban to heel in Afghanistan or Pakistan. It did not save Mubarak or the elected government that followed him from being overthrown by coups d'état. It does not intimidate either Bashar Al-Assad or Da'ish. It has not shifted Iran's nuclear policy. It does not obviate military actions by Israel against its neighbors. It has had no impact on the political kaleidoscope in Lebanon. It does not assure tranquility in Bahrain. It did not produce satisfying results in Libya. Its newest incarnation — drone warfare — has not decapitated anti-American terrorism so much as metastasized it.

War is an extension of policy by other means. If the policy is incoherent, the use of force to further it will be purposeless, military action in support of it will be feckless, and the results it produces will be contradictory. Bombing first and developing a strategy later does not work. But that's what our political establishment stamped us into doing with Da'ish. President Obama was right to insist that we take the time to develop a strategy before resorting to the use of force. Unfortunately, he did not have the courage of his convictions.

Where this leaves us is in an unfortunate position. Without a strategy that addresses the socio-political factors and grievances that have empowered the so-called Islamic State, or Da'ish, and its predecessors, we are going to lose this war.

We have a military campaign plan but lack a political program. We are bombing Da'ish to contain it. There is little reason to believe this will prove effective. Based on past experience, there is no reason to believe it will evolve into a strategy.

We and our European allies are, in many ways, the wrong leaders of the struggle against Da'ish. It can only be defeated by a coalition with credible Islamic credentials. Our armed forces and intelligence services could provide decisive support to such a coalition, but none is now in prospect.

Da'ish displays unity of command, strong discipline, and elevated morale. The coalition we have assembled to oppose it has no agreed objectives. It is divided, disjointed, and demoralized.

Da'ish is taking territory and seizing strategic positions. We are using air power tactically for mainly humanitarian and propaganda purposes. This has led us to defend areas that are of little or no strategic importance. We are not blocking Da'ish from expanding its territory, population, and resource base.

There is no concerted effort outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to refute and discredit the deviant theology that inspires Da'ish and its sympathizers. It has gobbled up large parts of Iraq and Syria. Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine could well be next.

Even if Da'ish can somehow be eliminated, Arab backlash to the distress of foreign attack from the air, sectarian violence, and civil strife ensures the birth of successor movements. Adding yet another factional force to this mix is not going to alter this reality. It may exacerbate it.

The approach we are using to deal with Da'ish is a variant of the bomb-first, develop-a-strategy-later approach we have used over the past decade and more. This has helped to spread Islamist terrorism across an ever wider swath of territory from Mali to Kashmir. There is no reason to believe that air force and drone attacks will produce a different result now.

If we cannot correct these deficiencies, we are very likely to see widening multinational and Palestinian terrorist activity against Americans and Israelis, coordinated by Da'ish or something like it. No Arab or Muslim country will be immune to disrup-

tion. If there were ever a moment for Arabs and Americans to work together, it is now. If there were ever a moment for the United States to insist on Arab commitment and leadership of such a joint effort, this is it.

Source: Middle East Policy Council

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