Egypt Hosts Bright Star Exercise **Crisis Response Unit Protects Afghanistan** Multinational Forces Gather in Aqaba SECURING THE REGION





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Around the Region



UNIPATH

Regional Security

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CENTCOM COMMANDER

GENERAL JOSEPH L. VOTEL U.S. Army



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KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE

t is my great pleasure to present this edition of U.S. Central Command's Unipath magazine with a focus on regional security. This edition addresses an important topic: the need for friendly forces to work as a team to confront challenges and threats to enforce security and stability in the Middle East and other conflict regions. We in the Jordan Armed Forces understand the importance of

being part of international coalitions and joint military operations, whether we're involved in military training or operations in Afghanistan or engaging imams and women in our armed forces to communicate with populations in conflict zones. In addition, we send peacekeeping troops to participate in peace operations throughout the world.

We also appreciate the importance of partnerships in confronting risks and threats in the region. Building and maintaining relationships by protecting common interests and strategic objectives will help build cohesive forces capable of working toward successful military operations. These partnerships also help countries with limited resources such as Jordan to build forces with advanced capabilities with a focus on efficiency rather than quantity.

Jordan, for example, participated actively in the international coalition in fighting extremist ideology espoused by terrorist organizations such as al-Qaida and Daesh that hide behind the Islamic religion. Islam is innocent of the crimes terrorists commit in its name. The Amman Message launched by His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein was a strategic weapon used by friendly armies to fight the toxic ideology that fuels terrorism and extremism. A leading role was played by the Iftaa Department and the faculty of Emir Hassan College for Islamic Studies in the Jordan Armed Forces. The college prepares imams by arming them with religious expertise that qualifies them to win the fight against terrorist thought by advocating a message of tolerance and moderation. These imams disseminate a message of love and peace in Jordan and across the world.

Jordan is a role model for the region. It has established a scientific center to counter extremist ideology at all levels through a major program that awards master's degrees in counterterrorism studies and organizes other courses to combat extremist ideology.

An international partnership arranged for refugee



camps in Jordan for Syrians who fled combat zones. Jordan has pursued humane policies in dealing with refugees by providing all the necessities of life. The international partnership supported Jordan's efforts, especially our brothers in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia and friends in the European Union and the United States of America.

Jordan is not the only

country that reaps the fruits of international cooperation. Iraq's continuing victories over Daesh in areas that had been seized offer the best example of consolidated efforts toward countering threats. Another vital partnership is the maritime alliance that limits piracy and extends stability in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, benefiting the global economy.

The conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan illustrate that violence and terrorism don't stop at borders and can threaten neighboring countries. International partnerships and joint efforts are required to ensure the capabilities of armed forces and secure borders with the latest technologies and equipment. To ensure enduring regional and global peace, such cooperation must be extended in the future to combat extremism.

The military defeat of Daesh does not mean the end of terrorism and extremism. We must realize that its ideology will survive and may resurface under a different banner. We must also confront the horrible legacy of Daesh, like the hundreds of thousands of children under the age of 18 deprived of schooling and left to unknown fates. Not only could they have problems finding jobs, but terrorists could exploit the ignorance and polarization caused by lack of education. We need to seek peaceful and reasonable solutions to issues that remain unresolved regionally and internationally.

The Eager Lion exercise hosted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan seven times since 2011 has made a big impact in helping countries to broaden experience, share tactics and weapons and recognize differences in command structure. Such exercises help participants unify concepts and share experiences and ideas while engaging in joint operations.

Lt. Gen. Mahmoud A. Freihat Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Jordan Armed Forces

BRIGHT BRIGHT SIAR,

THE BILATERAL MILITARY EXERCISE
BRINGS TOGETHER FORCES TO ADDRESS
EVOLVING SECURITY THREATS

UNIPATH STAFF

wo Egyptian Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons roared overhead on a reconnaissance mission to a border village. Intelligence detected a large depot of weapons and ammunition and other evidence identifying the village as a base for terrorists. This triggered a massive bilateral response from Egyptian and U.S. forces.

Naval vessels assembled near the coast, tanks rolled into position, helicopters loaded with anti-tank missiles took to the skies and paratroopers dove out of airplanes. It wasn't long before the terrorist threat was eliminated, leaving behind smoldering targets and clouds of dust.

The impressive display of military prowess during this combined arms live-fire exercise signaled the culmination of the Bright Star 2017 military exercise. The combined bilateral U.S. Central Command field-training and

command-post exercise focused on improving regional security and stability. It was held September 10-20, 2017, at the Mohammed Naguib Military Base, the largest such complex in the Middle East and Africa.

An Egyptian Soldier holds his national flag during Bright Star 2017. STAFF SGT. MICHAEL BATTLES/U.S. AIR FORCE

Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Ibrahim Mahmoud Hegazy, then chief of staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces, attended the combined arms live-fire exercise demonstration and praised the professionalism and prowess of the combined forces.





Maj. Gen. Nasser Assy, commander of the Egyptian Armed Forces Training Authority, speaks during the senior leader seminar. EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

"I SALUTE ALL THE OFFICERS,
NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS,
AND SOLDIERS FROM BOTH THE
EGYPTIAN AND U.S. SIDES
AND THE MILITARY OBSERVERS
PARTICIPATING IN THE BRIGHT
STAR 2017 EXERCISES. I
CONFIRM OUR ASPIRATIONS TO
INCREASE THE DEPTH OF OUR
COOPERATION WITH THE U.S.
FORCES IN THE FUTURE."

— Maj. Gen. Nasser Assy, Commander of the Egyptian Armed Forces Training Authority

"BRIGHT STAR IS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE OUR ABILITY TO PARTNER AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL AND IDENTIFY BEST PRACTICES IN COUNTERING ASYMMETRIC THREATS."

— Maj. Gen. Terrence McKenrick, U.S. Army Central deputy commander "We have the will, the determination and the potential to eradicate the roots of terrorism that threaten the region and the peoples of the world," Lt. Gen. Hegazy said. "This joint exercise carried out by our Armed Forces ... sends a message to reassure the Egyptian people that their Armed Forces are capable of protecting and preserving their homeland."

First held in 1981, Bright Star builds on the strategic security relationship between the U.S. and Egypt. The previous Bright Star exercise was in 2009 with more than 15 countries and 15,000 participants.

"We are pleased to resume this exercise between the U.S. military, the strongest army in the world, and the Egyptian Army, the oldest organized military in history, which has vast combat expertise. This will afford us the opportunity to exchange experiences in dealing with different military situations and develop combat methods to counter terrorism," said Maj. Gen. Nasser Mohamed Assy, commander of the Egyptian Armed Forces Training Authority.

Representatives from Bahrain, Burundi, Cypress, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom observed Bright Star 2017.

"This exercise manifests the bonds of cooperation and friendship that connect our countries and armed forces, as well as emphasizing the mutual interest in the framework of countering terrorism and maintaining international peace and security," said Egyptian Maj. Gen. Khaled Khairy, Bright Star 2017 exercise director for the Egyptian Armed Forces.

"This environment enables us to break barriers of training, communication, capabilities and work together in an appropriate environment," Maj. Gen. Khairy said. "This exercise also helps in exchanging expertise, increasing understanding and the ability of joint cooperation, so that we will be able to work together in countering terrorism and maintaining international peace and security, to set an international example."

Egypt's history of strength and perseverance in the face of threats offers much opportunity for countries that work together. U.S. Maj. Gen. Jon Mott, U.S. Central Command director of exercises and training, said he looks forward to working with Egypt in the future and studying what both countries learned from the joint exercise.

"Bright Star has been the leading engagement between the United States and Egypt to collectively address the common interest we share in combating regional challenges," Maj. Gen. Mott said. "It is through exercises like Bright Star that bring our militaries together and allow us to build trust, strengthen partnerships and enhance our capabilities."

Events began with a five-day command-post exercise (CPX), held indoors. Egyptian and U.S. forces created a



Then Egyptian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Ibrahim Mahmoud Hegazy, center, and other senior leaders watch a live-fire exhibition. STAFF SGT. MICHAEL BATTLES/U.S. AIR FORCE



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UNIPATH STAFF

LEARNING FROM THE UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES OF MILITARY LEADERS IS ONE OF THE MANY BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL MILITARY EXERCISES. DURING BRIGHT STAR 2017, UNIPATH INTERVIEWED EGYPTIAN MAJ. GEN. ALI ADEL ASHMAWY, COMMANDER OF EGYPT'S NORTHERN MILITARY ZONE. HERE IS A CONDENSED VERSION OF HIS SENTIMENTS REGARDING THE EXERCISE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MILITARY PARTNERSHIPS.

UNIPATH: We congratulate you on the great success of Bright Star. What did you think about the events in 2017?

MAJ. GEN. ALI ADEL ASHMAWY: First, I just want to point out a brief history of the Bright Star exercises. Bright Star exercises have been the leading engagement between the U.S. and Egyptian armed forces. They both have agreed to exchange leadership and training experiences and agreed to joint training between the two forces. The Bright Star exercise began in 1981 between the United States and Egypt and continued till 2009. The maneuvers were conducted every two years, but were suspended once in 2003 because of the Iraq War, and a second time in 2011 after the January 25 revolution. The resumption of the Bright Star exercises after its six-year suspension is where we are today. We hope the Bright Star exercise will continue on a regular basis through the coming years.

UNIPATH: How does the exercise further strengthen the U.S.-Egyptian relationship?

MAJ. GEN. ASHMAWY: We in Egypt believe that the U.S. military is one of the largest in the world, and we also consider the Egyptian Army as one of the oldest armies in the world. We in the Armed Forces believe that the joining of these two armies brings better understanding and cooperation, and I think this conception corresponds to the United

States' vision. The Bright Star exercise has many goals, one of which is learning about each other's capabilities and potential. When Egypt's military doctrine is united with the United States' military doctrine to protect security and border control of these countries, I believe this would benefit all individuals, officers and Soldiers in both armies. It also allows them to view each other's processes, learn best practices, and more important, for us to learn about the new U.S. weapons technology while the U.S. learns about our strategies and weapons.

UNIPATH: Egypt has achieved much success in fighting terror-

ism, success acknowledged by several countries. How important is having an effective strategy against terrorism, and what can other countries learn from Egyptian's best practices in fighting terrorism?

MAJ. GEN. ASHMAWY: I thank you for this question because the focus of this year's training is to fight terrorism. Terrorism is not only a problem for Egypt or the Middle East, it's an enemy of the whole world. Fighting terrorism is the main factor today for security stability, and it impacts the development of countries. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, president of the republic and supreme commander of the Egyptian Armed Forces, said we are waging a war on behalf of the world. His Excellency also said at the 72nd session of the United Nations General [Assembly] that terrorism has become a loathsome disease that we should fight. The fact that the U.S. and Egyptian militaries both agreed to develop a common strategy and training to fight terrorism — I think that's a big positive step. Hopefully in the near future, all countries will join us to fight the main enemy of the whole world: "hateful terrorism," as the supreme commander of the Armed Forces has called it.

I would like to thank you all and offer my sincere appreciation to all U.S. military members who participated in this training. Also, I would like to give my thanks, appreciation and respect to all Egyptian forces and troops, officers and Soldiers who participated in this training.



a training event. EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

U.S. Gen. Joseph Votel, commander of U.S. Central Command, meets with Egyptian and U.S. forces. EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

combined staff battalion and dealt with fictional crises scenarios. Maj. Gen. Khairy explained that this portion of Bright Star was critical: "Wargames such as a CPX are considered one of the best ways to train commanders on making decisions, troop leading procedures and acting through emergencies. This exercise also helps in exchanging expertise, increasing understanding and the ability of joint cooperation."

Sharing information from a more strategic perspective, military leaders from 14 of the observing countries, along with Egypt and the United States, took part in a daylong senior leader seminar during Bright Star.

"The senior leader seminar is an important part of the exercise because it focuses on terrorism and counterterrorism," Maj. Gen. Assy said. "This allows us to fight terrorism with an effective strategy."

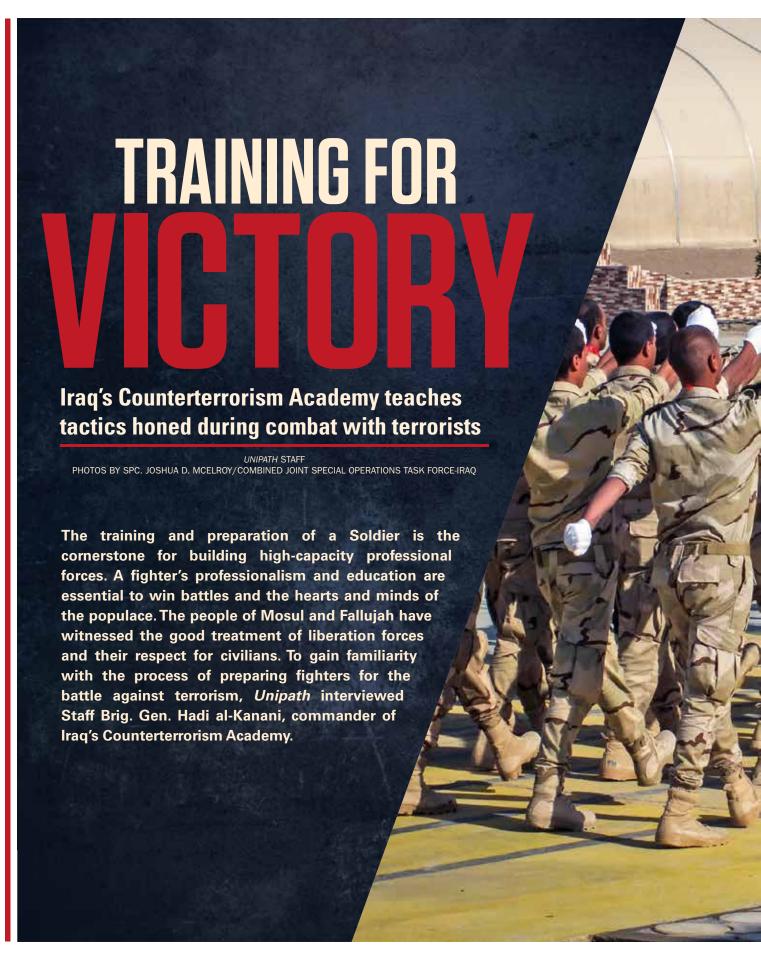
Presentations focused on countering terrorism and disrupting improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

"These two topics have shown themselves to be of utmost importance to our current fight, and we all have much to share and much to learn from one another," said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Terrence McKenrick, U.S. Army Central deputy commander. "Counterterrorism and counter-IED knowledge has been gleaned from years of hard fighting, and sharing our experiences is the only way to ensure an effective response to extremist terrorists throughout the region and around the world."

He explained that terrorist organizations succeed by exploiting divisions in politics and geography to attract new recruits.

"We must infiltrate these seams by sharing information on tactics, techniques and procedures, by planning, by rehearsing and executing operations together. This Bright Star exercise is our opportunity to do these things. The importance of Bright Star to our relationship cannot be overstated," Maj. Gen. McKenrick told leaders at the seminar.

These sentiments were echoed by Maj. Gen. Assy: "Bright Star exercises help in exchanging expertise, increasing understanding and the ability of joint cooperation, so that we will be able to work together in countering terrorism and maintaining international peace and security." \





Unipath: Please describe the qualities of an effective Soldier. Brig. Gen. Hadi: He is a fighter who reaches the upper stages of professionalism in training and fighting as well as acknowledges his duties with respect to human rights by following his commitment to his oath made when he graduated as a fighter in special operations. Such a Soldier faces his enemy courageously without divesting himself of humanity in the treatment of the captured and the wounded. Our goal at the Counterterrorism Academy is to prepare and train the fighter to be worthy to wear the logo of special operations, to serve as a role model for his colleagues and to provide the beautiful image of the hero in the minds of Iraqis.

Unipath: Counterterrorism forces gained great experience from battles such those in Fallujah, the "Charge of the Knights" in southern Iraq and the liberation of hostages at the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance. How did the academy integrate these lessons into its curriculum? **Brig. Gen. Hadi:** We have benefited greatly from experiences in the field in the war against Daesh since 2014. The duties initially assigned to counterterrorism forces differed from those assigned to conventional forces. Our main task

bombs used by terrorists on the battlefield and how they exploited urban areas to conceal them for use against our advancing troops. We have started training fighters on how to frustrate enemy tactics by identifying the location of car bombs and destroying them before an attack. Furthermore, Daesh terrorists adopted a new method of fighting by using tunnels to hide in and allow themselves freedom of movement and to resupply themselves. The academy incorporated special training on how to destroy tunnels. In addition, Daesh deployed unmanned aerial vehicles — UAVs — in western Mosul to attack our forces with grenades or select the placement of car bombs to disable our advancing columns. With the help of our coalition partners, we developed effective training to defend against the dangers of this weapon.

Unipath: Is this training suitable only for seasoned Soldiers or is it also useful for new recruits? **Brig. Gen. Hadi:** After each battle, we regroup and train each unit to prepare for upcoming battles. During this training, we hold open discussions in which fighters share their experiences. On the other hand, we share techniques adopted by other units in other battles to

66 Our goal at the Counterterrorism Academy is to prepare and train the fighter to be worthy to wear the logo of special operations, to serve as a role model for his colleagues and to provide the beautiful image of the hero in the minds of the Iraqis. 99 -Staff Brig. Gen. Hadi al-Kanani



was tracking and capturing high value targets — the leaders of terrorist organizations, their financiers and their field commanders. But we were forced to take the field after 2014, when it became our duty to defend Iraq. Iraq was subjected to a major attack by Daesh in 2014, when major cities such as Mosul were assaulted, forcing us to fight in urban areas and hold defensive positions.

In addition, the commander in chief of the Armed Forces tasked us with liberating cities from Daesh gangs. These endeavors have given us great experience, and the academy's training curriculum has been developed on this pattern of fighting. We learned many great lessons not only for our forces, but for all the special operations forces in the world. We have seen Daesh in combat evolving rapidly and using certain tactics; we have changed training curricula based on the changes in the field. We have also focused on building the skills of platoon-level officers to make decisions in the field based on circumstances on the battlefield. Preparing young officers and noncommissioned officers is key to victory in the urban fighting.

For example, we have witnessed the method of car

thwart enemy tactics. We are working with our coalition partners to find tactical solutions to defeat enemy tactics in upcoming battles.

As for new recruits, up until the year 2014 our procedure began with selection, then ranger school and then placement in tactical units. But after 2014 we thought Soldiers needed more training, based on orders we received from the general commanding the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS). So we began to provide specialized training to fighters who successfully completed the ranger courses. This specialization included fighting in urban areas, a counterterrorism course, and courses in weapons, mortars, first aid, communications and handling explosives. This ensured our graduates came equipped with more skills than fighters who graduated before 2014. This is one of the most important lessons we have learned from the battle-field after 2014.

We engage them in classes divided into several specialized groups, each course taking as long as 60 days. The fighter spends almost six months at the academy before assignment to tactical units. This training has yielded



greater professionalism. As a result, field commanders have witnessed the success of this program, especially having highly capable fighters using fresh tactics. Gen. Talib Shaghati Alkenani, our commander, has given us instructions on how to improve curricula and intensify courses even more. The next phase will include troops training a full year before being sent into the field.

Unipath: What is the role of international partners in building the capacity of professional special operations forces in Iraq?

Brig. Gen. Hadi: The creation of Iraqi Special Operations Forces was initiated by United States Special Operations after 2003. They started as Unit 36, followed by the formation of the second battalion called the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Force (ICTF). Members were sent to specialized training courses in Jordan. U.S. special forces played a major role in training and equipping this strategic force, and we have close ties with our American friends and conducted many joint missions between the years of 2006 and 2008. After 2014, the relationship between the Iraqi special forces and our partners in the international coalition has become so profound that today we have experts from the United States, Australia, France, Poland, Belgium and Spain working with us as a team to build Iraqi special operations. The training is conducted between the coalition forces and Iraqi instructors.

Unipath: Brig. Gen. Ahmed Kaiber, director of the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC), recently expressed pride in the victories of Iraqi Special Operations Forces. What can you say about the role of KASOTC and cooperation between Iraq and Jordan?

Brig. Gen. Hadi: We have had a great relationship with our brothers in Jordanian special operations since 2003. Our special operations training began in Jordan, and many Iraqi special operations fighters graduated from

KASOTC. After the Daesh occupation of Mosul, KASOTC played a critical role in rebuilding the capacity of Iraqi Special Operations Forces, where training was provided by American experts in cooperation with Jordanians. We also sent troops to attend specialized courses on freeing hostages and the handling of hijacked aircraft, as well as several other courses. Iraq and Jordan cooperate closely, specifically in this area, and we are grateful to our brothers in Jordan for hosting Iraqi Special Operations Forces and for standing with Iraq in this crisis.

As you know, terrorism has become a cross-border problem, and all nations must work together to prevail. We are working with all the coalition countries to build the combat capabilities of Iraqi Special Operations Forces; our academy is engaged in significant work in this area. We are grateful to our partners in the international coalition for their dedication and cooperation with the academic staff in the training and reorganization of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service. Their efforts have been significant in the performance of our fighters in the field.

Unipath: What differentiates counterterrorism units from the rest of the Armed Forces in the process of selecting the fighter?

Brig. Gen. Hadi: First, new recruits must pass a health and fitness exam. Fighters must demonstrate strength and endurance and adapt to any terrain or environment. Basically, we focus on high physical fitness. New recruits must also qualify for security clearances, which means no adverse political or militant affiliations, and possess a clean criminal record. When these guidelines are completed and met, we start the training courses. We don't assign fighters based on favoritism and social status but on their loyalty to Iraq.

We endorse the principles and policies of the CTS through lectures. The CTS shows zero tolerance for ethnosectarianism. Violators are immediately expelled, because our mission is to serve under the banner of a single Iraq. These principles were the main foundation of the CTS, which helped us to cohere and survive the darkest days of sectarian violence. When our fighters liberate an area, they treat civilians fairly, and citizens have witnessed this fact. Our men were able to win the hearts and minds of residents, who quickly shared information about Daesh hideouts and weapons caches. There is no doubt that intensive training and education made a significant, positive impact on how fighters engaged with civilians in combat zones.

Unipath: Do you have a message for your training partners in the coalition forces?

Brig. Gen. Hadi: We are grateful and appreciative for their efforts and time in training our fighters. These trainers have left their loved ones behind and traveled across oceans to participate in this demonstration of global unity in the fight against terror. They have supported the CTS and improved it organizationally and tactically in the fight against Daesh. Words of appreciation aren't enough to express how we feel about our partners.



Afghanistan's <mark>National Mission Brigade</mark> is leading the fight against terrorists and criminals





UNIPATH STAFF

t's hard not to feel at ease with Afghan Col. Khanullah Shuja. He is warm, welcoming and smiles readily. He radiates passion for serving his country and the Soldiers under his command. It's obvious why they describe him using words such as "brave," "patient," "fair" and "intelligent."

"When I first met him, I instantly wished I had commanders like him my whole career," said Capt. Hemad, Col. Shuja's plans officer. "He makes this unit extremely strong."

Don't mistake his kindness for weakness, though. Col. Shuja was handpicked as the leader needed to stand up Afghanistan's premier special operations unit, the National Mission Brigade, and he runs a professional, forward-thinking organization.

It was activated July 31, 2017, with staffing from the ministries of defense and interior and the National Directorate of Security. The unit is part of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command's continued effort to defeat the Taliban, Daesh, and other terrorists and criminals in the country.

The brigade is focused on responding to national-level crises and conducting intelligence-driven operations.

"Our training gives us confidence during battle, understanding that we have the knowledge to fight our enemy, but also awareness that we are a professional force."

"Over the last year, security threats throughout Afghanistan have increased. Having a special brigade that can respond rapidly to threats is a great accomplishment for the Afghan Special Security Forces," said Maj. Gen. Tariq Shah Bahrami, the country's acting defense minister, in the summer of 2017.

Unipath spoke to Col. Shuja, his staff and his Soldiers, who were honing their skills at a pistol and mortar range. All expressed pride to be part of the brigade and spoke of their admiration and respect for their new commander.

The morning of Col. Shuja's interview coincided with his daily briefing from his staff. Col. Shuja listened intently, asking his officers pointed questions but also soliciting advice, suggestions and recommendations. Afterward, he addressed his entire staff, praising them for their hard work while encouraging them to exceed the high standards he had set.

When it comes to preparing his troops, he likes to quote the famous U.S. Army commander, Gen. George Patton: "The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in battle."

Col. Shuja notes that his leadership style has been influenced not just by the time he spent in the United States, but also by his interaction with leaders from other countries: "It's a combination of leadership styles that I've made my own. I would give everything I have to lead these men successfully."

Here are the highlights of Col. Shuja's interview with *Unipath*:

UNIPATH: What do you hope to accomplish leading the National Mission Brigade?

Col. Shuja: I am grateful to lead this unit. I hope to use the knowledge I have received to make this brigade the standard for all special forces units

A unit of Afghanistan's National Mission Brigade conducts a night training exercise in December 2017. SPC. JACOB KRONE/U.S. ARMY



across Afghanistan. We hope to be a role model for other units and the cornerstone of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command. Someday, I hope that we defend not just Afghanistan, but can also become members of peacekeeping operations in other countries as well.

UNIPATH: How important is training to the National Mission Brigade?

Col. Shuja: Training is an essential part of military operations. Our resources and technology utilized in tough training scenarios make us different from other Afghan units. We have had the opportunity to train with some of the best quality Soldiers from around the world, including U.S. Special Forces. Our training gives us confidence during battle, understanding that we have the knowledge to fight our enemy, but also awareness that we are a professional force.

UNIPATH: Can you describe units within the Afghan military that have been successful in confronting the nation's enemies?

Col. Shuja: All Afghan military units have worked extremely hard to be successful since the transition. Many people doubted Afghan security forces, but they have done a great job and remain trustworthy. The Afghan National Army Special Operations forces have faced multiple challenges and continue to make a huge difference. The commando patch we wear is trusted by the people. When we did an operation in Parwan, the local people were scared initially, but when they saw the commando patch on the sleeves on the Soldiers, they knew we were there to keep them safe. They believe in us.

UNIPATH: How is the National Mission Brigade different from other units in the Afghan military?

Col. Shuja: We focus on night operations and rapid deployment. We are

"I would give everything I have to lead these men successfully."



Col. Shuja announces the activation of the National Mission Brigade on July 31, 2017.

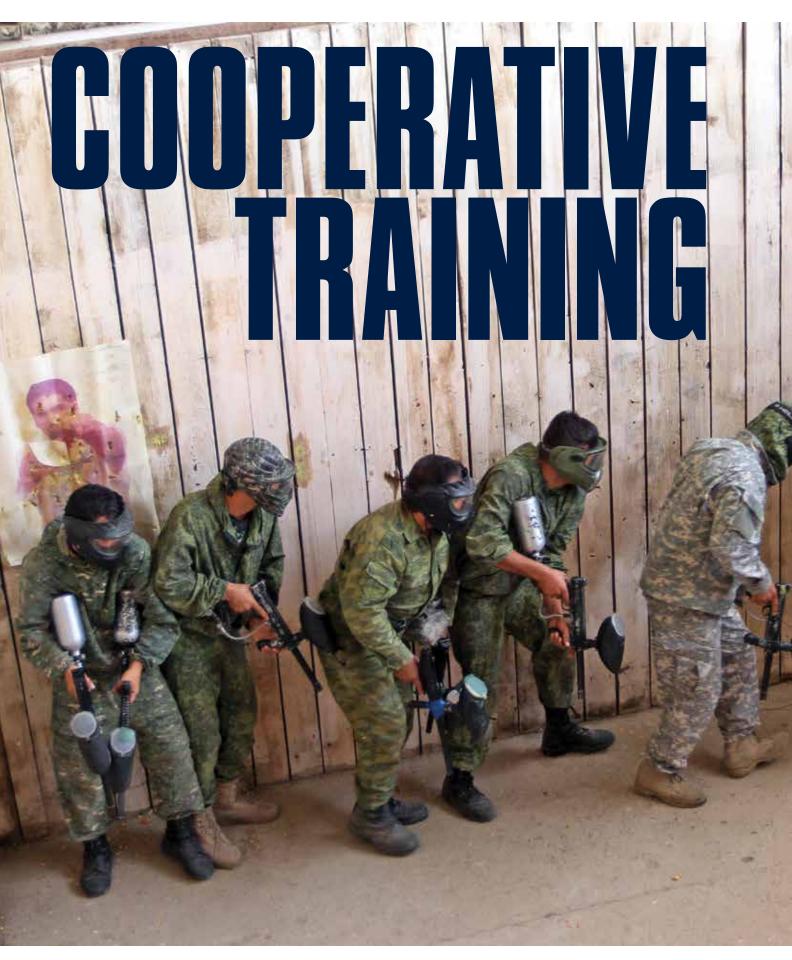
available to deploy anywhere in 12 hours. The training we receive, the complicated nature of our missions and our intelligence capabilities set us apart from other Afghan military units. It takes a special kind of Soldier to join a unit like this. We have extremely high standards for our officers and Soldiers.

UNIPATH: How can your country's multinational coalition partners help bring stability to Afghanistan?

Col. Shuja: Our partners continue to help us with resources, training and equipment. They bolster and enhance our existing capabilities. Coalition forces have brought lots of reconstruction projects and programs to this country that directly help peace-keeping efforts. We need the experience and knowledge from other countries to understand the best ways to bring peace. We've sent pilots to other countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, to get training, and hopefully someday we can train with Jordanian special forces as well.

UNIPATH: Describe the qualities of an ideal special forces Soldier.

Col. Shuja: Motivated, professional, loyal, brave, strong (mentally and physically) and a believer in the cause and their country.





TAJIKISTAN HOSTS REGIONAL COOPERATION 17 WITH A FOCUS ON MULTINATIONAL PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

UNIPATH STAFF

n a hot late July afternoon at Fakhrabad military training center, a line of hills and fruit orchards in the distance, a squad of Tajik peacekeeping troops was ambushed by violent extremists. The Tajik patrol maneuvered through brittle fields of brush to kill or capture the attackers. The Soldiers proceeded to clear a building used as an enemy stronghold and evacuated their wounded comrades and prisoners.

The Tajik troops had spent four days conducting a joint tactical field exercise with U.S. Soldiers from the Virginia Army National Guard, exercise events that included detecting improvised explosive devices and providing first aid to stanch bullet wounds.

It served as a demonstration of what was taking place about 50 kilometers away at the Tajik Ministry of Defense: a multinational command-post exercise called Regional Cooperation 17.

Now in its 14th year, Regional Cooperation is U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM's) premier exercise designed for Central and South Asian militaries to prepare them to participate in multinational peacekeeping operations.

Tajikistan hosted the latest version of the exercise in July 2017, attracting more than 200 participants from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Mongolia and the United States. Kazakhstan sent an observer.

"Exercises of this kind are a unique opportunity for Soldiers to gain new knowledge and practical skills," said Saidjafar Ismonov, a member of the Tajik parliament. "This is crucial for our Soldiers, especially in responding to terror threats. Moreover, it strengthens regional cooperation. Our partnership with the U.S. is becoming stronger, and it brings our countries together."

The group consisting mostly of officers operated for nearly a week as headquarters staff for a multinational infantry brigade, engaged in fictional scenarios testing their ability to cooperate despite differences in language, leadership and doctrine.

The 2017 scenarios had separatists break away from a country called Regislavia to form a small Central Asian nation called Bahora. Multinational task forces under the auspices of the United Nations needed to police a cease-fire while dealing with border incursions by terrorists, weapons and drugs smuggling, a devastating earthquake and humanitarian crises.

"Exercises of this kind are a unique opportunity for Soldiers to gain new knowledge and practical skills. This is crucial for our Soldiers, especially in responding to terror threats. Moreover, it strengthens regional cooperation. Our partnership with the U.S. is becoming stronger, and it brings our countries together."

- Saidjafar Ismonov, a member of the Tajik parliament Tajik Soldiers engage in field training. SGT. MATT KUZARA/U.S. ARMY CENTRAL



A Kyrgyz officer, left, and a Tajik officer collaborate on a mission in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. ${\sf STAFF}$ SGT. MICHAEL BATTLES/U.S. AIR FORCE



Tajik troops perform a close quarters battle movement in Fakhrabad. STAFF SGT. MICHAEL BATTLES/U.S. AIR FORCE

"The scenario is a realistic possibility for everyone," said Pakistani Army Col. Aamir Salim, who served as deputy commander of the simulated brigade. "To effectively play your role in such an eventuality, the exercise is very important."

Regular military briefings updated commanders on what was happening. Officers then dispersed to separate cells dedicated to such tasks as logistics, operations and public affairs.

Sometimes the tasks were as basic as transporting drinking water to thousands of troops on the ground. At other times, the headquarters staff needed to deal with disasters such as a powerful earthquake that damaged a hydroelectric dam responsible for generating 90 percent of the country's electricity. Losing the dam would cripple Bahora's economy.

Huddled over laptop computers and maps, participants bridged the communications gap by seeking out common languages. The Kyrgyz, Tajik and Mongolian officers used Russian as a common tongue while Americans and Pakistanis spoke English to each other. Translators hovered nearby to bridge any gaps.

"It is important for us to work together so that when we actually have to deploy together for combat or peacekeeping or any other operations we already have bonds built," said U.S. Col. George Harrington of the Massachusetts Army National Guard.

Inevitably, differences in philosophy among the national delegations needed to be smoothed out. For example, during a mock press conference, Tajik commander Col. Nurridin Sattorov coolly handled questions from sometimes bullying reporters.

But afterward, trainers pointed out that Col. Sattorov's public affairs officer should have instructed him to rebuff a reporter's accusation that the brigade was issuing "propaganda." Winning a war of words can be decisive, particularly in conflicts shaped by ideology such as counterterrorism operations.

"The training will provide us with the chance to learn from one another's experiences," said Mongolian Army Maj. Amartaivan, the public affairs officer.

The Mongolian delegation, which cited its experience dealing with the United Nations and Tajik forces, attended the exercise to strengthen officers' skills in border security and counterterrorism. Mongolia hosts an exercise of its own called Khaan Quest.

As part of the scenario, participants needed to keep the peace in a demilitarized zone between Bahora and Regislavia and intercept shipments of weapons of mass destruction hidden by terrorists among medical supplies.

"We have experience in U.N. peacekeeping missions, but we have to train and get more experience for this coalition force," Mongolian Col. Tumendemberel said.

Because exercises such as Regional Cooperation stress the need for officers to seize the initiative, Col. Aamir of Pakistan said the experience will be useful in his country's decadelong fight against terrorism. Local commanders facing down terrorists need greater freedom of action, and Col. Aamir was happy to see that independent spirit demonstrated by partner nations at the exercise in Tajikistan.

"It gives you comfort," he said.

CENTCOM has held Regional Cooperation since 2001. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have hosted the exercise during the past 14 iterations. For U.S. Army Maj. Robert McCracken, the lead exercise planner, Regional Cooperation provides a chance for multinational forces to improve coordination and interoperability to address issues critical to Central and South Asia.

"We don't always get to work side by side with partner nations until a real-world situation occurs," Maj. McCracken said. "However, RC 17 affords us and those nations a prime opportunity to learn from each other and develop relationships to prepare for future missions."



STRENGTHENING REGIONAL MARINE FORCES

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY CPL. TRAVIS JORDAN/U.S. MARINE CORPS

The Regional Marine Symposium in Aqaba highlights the importance of training, leadership and equipment

ith Daesh, al-Qaida and other unconventional threats menacing the Middle East and Central Asia, regional militaries are increasingly calling on their marine and naval infantry forces. These compact, flexible units play a key role in

safeguarding their nations' security against shifting threats.

Officers from the Middle East and Pakistan gathered at the second annual Regional Marine Symposium at the port and naval base in Aqaba, Jordan, in August 2017 to share tactics and information vital to these military missions.

The symposium — the theme was performance-oriented, standards-based training — attracted field-grade officers from Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), along with about 45 U.S. Marines.

"Our motto is to 'train as we fight, and fight as we train," said Lt. Col. Hisham Khaleel Mubarak Al Jarrah, commanding officer of the 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion. "Our training is based on realistic premises and scenarios that we may face in the future."

In addition to presentations by officers from the various national delegations, the symposium included sessions on training and equipment and a live-fire demonstration at Camp Titin near Agaba.

TRAINING LEADERS

Leadership is critical to a military unit's success. Speakers at the symposium highlighted the importance of nurturing the talents of junior officers and noncommissioned officers to operate resiliently and resourcefully on the battlefield.

"OUR **MOTTO IS** TO 'TRAIN AS WE FIGHT, AND FIGHT AS **WE TRAIN'"**

Lt. Col. Hisham Khaleel Mubarak Al Jarrah





U.S. Marines return after a simulated assault on enemy forces at Camp Titin in Jordan.

Regional Marine Symposium attendees tour a U.S. Marine Corps air-cushioned landing craft in Aqaba, Jordan.



During his opening address, Lt. Gen. William Beydler, commander of Marine Corps Forces Central (MARCENT), argued that "good platoon commanders and good noncommissioned officers make all the difference."

"We need to allow our young leaders to be creative," Lt. Gen. Beydler said. "Today, I learn more from our lieutenants than I can teach them."

Pakistani Navy Cmdr. Ghulam Shabeer agreed. "Platoon leaders and subordinate officers are the backbone of operations," he added. "We must focus on building and maintaining their skills."

Their point was brought home during a live-fire demonstration on the conference's second day. Attendees set out early one morning to Camp Titin, where they watched a platoon-size unit emerge from behind a mountain to attack an enemy emplacement with rifle and machine gun fire.

Immediately after the demonstration, U.S. Marine Brig. Gen. Frank Donovan, commander of amphibious forces for MARCENT, rated the performance of platoon and squad leaders, discussing where the team had excelled and where it had faltered. Such critical analysis is crucial to improving performance, Lt. Gen. Beydler emphasized.

"We have to win the fight we're in and be ready for the next one," he said. "The minute an organization finds it's too busy with operations to train, that organization will unravel in the near future. As good as we think we are, our adversary gets better every day. If we don't improve, we'll fall behind."

Jordan's Lt. Col. Hisham noted how his battalion benefited from similar training with its U.S. counterparts. "These fruits of the international partnership and the benefits of our friends' experiences help us build a professional force with advanced capabilities," he said.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Much of the conference's value lay in the bonds formed over the three days. Officers from different countries were able to share a meal, participate in meetings, view demonstrations and hold meaningful discussions.

The group visited the headquarters of the Royal Jordanian Navy for a weapons exposition and a boat tour of the Gulf of Aqaba that illustrated the port's strategic position near Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Jordanian troops described and demonstrated the use of vehicles and weapons, including



waterproof sniper rifles and pistols, designed for amphibious attacks.

Finally, the group toured the amphibious dock landing ship USS Carter Hall, moored at Aqaba, where U.S. Marines and U.S. Navy Sailors explained how they transport and launch amphibious ships, vehicles and troops on humanitarian and military missions. For Maj. Said al-Yamahi of the UAE, the visit to the ship was a highlight of the symposium. "Learning about its amphibious landing capabilities was very useful to us," he said.

Attendees remarked on the value of personal relationships for understanding the capabilities of partner forces in the region. Lt. Col. Ayad Rashid Shaheen, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion of the Iraq Marine Brigade expressed gratitude for the invitation to Aqaba, where he received information he hoped to apply in fighting terrorism at home.

"The more we foster the ties of friendship between military leaders in neighboring countries, the more we will see mutual understanding and joint action to establish security in our countries," Lt. Col. Ayad said.

In an era in which terrorist organizations and other unconventional threats cross international boundaries, the response must be equally global, said Lt. Col. Ghanem Mubarak Al Romaihi of the Bahrain Defense Force.

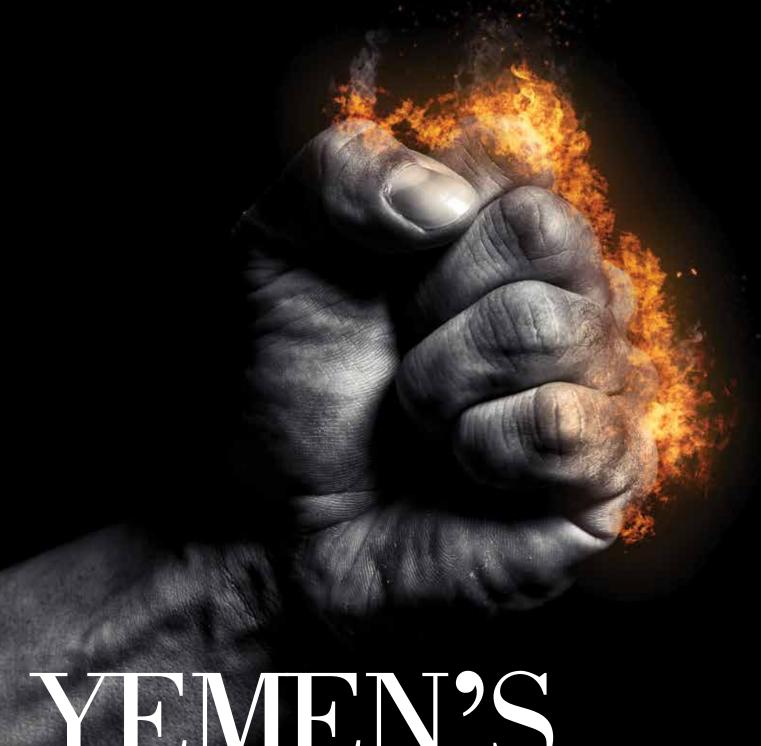
"We live in an age of unconventional warfare and global terrorist networks, so we need an international partnership to defeat this new type of threat," Lt. Col. Ghanem said.

A similar plea for a multinational cooperation came from Col. Kamal Nahra, executive officer of the Lebanese Armed Forces Marine Commando Regiment. Lebanon's experience combating violent extremists from Syria offers lessons for forces across the region.

"We must preserve this international partnership to combat these cross-border threats," he said. "Just as we need the support of our allies, our allies need our on-the-ground experience in the region."

Lt. Col. Hisham of Jordan summarized the conference's value for many of the participants.

"The interaction of our brothers from these participating countries was remarkable, indicating the seriousness of the debate and the success of the conference," he said. "I'm sure that everyone will return home with new ideas and tactics for training and mobilization."



YEVIET'S HIGHERORISM

The government conducts deradicalization programs to defeat al-Qaida and Daesh

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED STATES errorism has no limits and respects no boundaries. It is a phenomenon that plagues the world and needs to be addressed. To succeed in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, governments must adopt a holistic approach. This, however, cannot be realized without maintaining stability, security and the rule of law. Many countries facing terrorism take these three basic foundations for granted when designing their strategies.

The Republic of Yemen, before the Youth Revolution of 2011, possessed all three of these foundations to some extent, yet it failed because of the lack of political will. After 2012, however, Yemen had the political will and a firm commitment to fight terrorism in line with the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative. Only by restoring the state and overturning the coup of September 2014 can any efforts to combat and prevent terrorism and violent extremism in Yemen bear fruit.

YEMEN: A VICTIM OF TERRORISM

Yemen is on the front lines in the fight against terrorism and has been a victim of this phenomenon for years. In December 1998, a group headed by Abu al-Hassan al-Mehdar, leader of what was called the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, killed four British and Australian tourists in Yemen. Al-Mehdar was supported by Abu Hamza al-Masri, who was sentenced in January 2015 to life in prison after being found guilty of 11 counts of terrorism, including in Yemen, by a federal jury in the United States.

In October 2000, al-Qaida launched a suicide attack on the U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole at the port of Aden, which resulted in the death of 17 U.S. Sailors. In the aftermath of the attack, the U.S. and Yemen began cooperating on security; however, it was not until after September 11, 2001, that cooperation to combat



AQAP's narratives, like those of its mother organization, are based on the false assertion that it is the "true" follower of Islam.

terrorism was reinforced. Unfortunately, terrorism has been on the rise in Yemen ever since, and Yemenis have borne the brunt of it. In one of the ugliest terrorist attacks by al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen, terrorists stormed a military hospital in Sanaa in December 2013, killing 56 people and wounding 215 others with machine guns and hand grenades. In May 2012, an AQAP suicide bomber claimed the lives of over 100 young cadets from the Central Security Forces as they were rehearsing for the Yemen National Day parade in Sanaa. In August 2016, a Daesh affiliate claimed responsibility for a suicide car bombing against an army recruitment center in Aden that resulted in over 70 deaths and 80 wounded. And in December 2016, Daesh perpetrated two separate attacks within eight days of each other in and around an Aden military base, killing 88 people and injuring 79.

In Aden alone during 2016, AQAP and Daesh carried out 11 other deadly attacks. In 2016, in only Aden and Al Mukalla, AQAP and Daesh killed 337 military, security personnel and new recruits and injured 313 others. AQAP has for years targeted not only military and security personnel but also intelligence officers effective in tracking and exposing its networks. These attacks show how brutal and indiscriminate AQAP and Daesh are in targeting Yemenis.

GOVERNMENT COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS

Since the 2000s, during the term of then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh, government measures to address this issue were mainly security related and were intended more for soliciting foreign aid than combating terrorism. Even though Yemen started one of the first deradicalization programs to fight terrorism in its early stages, which was supported by the international community — especially the U.S. — the Saleh regime was unwilling to address the root causes of terrorism.

However, between 2012 and 2014, the new

government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi was successful, against all odds, in designing a new comprehensive counterterrorism approach that can be fully implemented in more parts of the country as government forces recapture territory from the Houthi-Saleh militia with the assistance and support of the Arab Coalition and the international community.

EARLY ATTEMPTS AT DERADICALIZATION

In 2003, Yemen launched one of the first deradicalization programs in the region, headed by well-respected Islamic cleric, Judge Hamoud al-Hitar, head of the Yemen Supreme Court and a former minister of religious endowments. Judge al-Hitar was also led the dialogue committee within the program, in charge of initiating a program aimed at engaging potential terrorists who have been arrested or captured. The first phase of the program was successful, according to al-Hitar, with 364 participants (out of a total of 420) freed after they renounced radical ideology and proved to have no criminal connections. Nevertheless, this program, using the motto "ideology can only be countered with ideology," lasted only three years, until late 2005.

The program had two phases: Phase one was a direct dialogue and rehabilitation subprogram, which was successful and showed positive results because many participants abandoned their previous radical interpretations of Islam. Phase two was a reintegration subprogram that proved more difficult to accomplish for several reasons. One was Saleh's security apparatus deliberately mishandling those released after phase one. Perhaps the most important reason was the unwillingness of the then-government to support the program, made evident by the lack of state media coverage and the reluctance by Saleh's regime to adopt its strategy and vision. This, eventually, led to the program's termination at the end of 2005, despite its promising initial success.

SECURITY AND COUNTERTERRORISM UNITS

Under Saleh, most if not all support and assistance provided by international partners — mainly the U.S. — was channeled to create and reinforce certain security apparatuses and counterterrorism units controlled by officials close to Saleh's son, Ahmed Ali Saleh, who was head of the Republican Guards and oversaw the special forces. His nephew, Amar Mohammed Saleh, was the first deputy of the newly created National Security Bureau and oversaw the al-Qaida file there. Another nephew, Yahya Mohammed Saleh, was chief of staff of the Special Security Forces (formerly known as Central Security Forces) and supervised the Counter Terrorism Unit.

The Saleh regime's objective was to build up the security and military apparatus in the name of counterterrorism operations, while at the same time undermining other deradicalization programs designed to address the core problems. Saleh was not only reluctant to eradicate al-Qaida in Yemen, he seemed to have used it for his benefit. "Al-Qaeda Informant," a 2015 investigation by al-Jazeera news "detailing information gathered from interviews with a former al-Qaeda operative," exposed dubious dealings between the old regime security apparatus and the al-Qaida network. The informant stated that a senior security official close to Saleh was involved in providing al-Qaida with explosives only three months before the September 2008 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Sanaa. Other government sources

have indicated that even as late as 2015, Saleh still maintained links with AQAP. The sources believe Saleh maintained dealings with AQAP during its year-long occupation of Al Mukalla as part of his campaign to undermine the legitimate government.

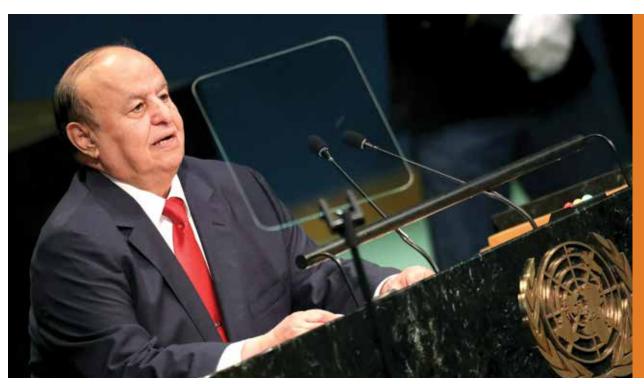
YEMEN'S NEW APPROACH

After the election of President Hadi in February 2012, the government shifted from focusing merely on military and security options in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism to a two-pronged approach. The government knew that reviving Yemen's early attempts at deradicalization and reintegration programs was as important — if not more so — than military and security options. This does not mean that the government abandoned or reduced its military operations against AQAP; on the contrary, military operations have intensified since 2012.

The government's new approach has been to develop a comprehensive strategy with cross-cutting executive measures. These measures needed to be both sustainable and, most important, commensurate with available resources. The comprehensive strategy focused on two main aspects: a military and security aspect, and a political, economic and social aspect. This approach led to the formation and adoption of Yemen's new counterterrorism strategy.

A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

On August 28, 2012, President Hadi instructed the government to revise and adopt a Comprehensive



Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi addresses the 71st United Nations General Assembly in September 2016. REUTERS

National Counterterrorism Strategy (CNCS), originally drafted by the High-Level Security Committee and taking into account inputs from all ministries including education, information and justice. On September 18, 2012, the government adopted the new strategy and created the High-Level Ministerial Committee, headed by the minister of foreign affairs, to supervise implementation by developing executive measures and budgetary requirements for each ministry to ensure execution. By August 2014, the work was done at the technical level; however, by that time the government was engulfed by political events leading to the coup of September 21, 2014. After that, the CNCS never saw the light of day.

REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

President Hadi issued a presidential decree in May 2014, creating a committee to reactivate and further develop Yemen's rehabilitation and reintegration program. The committee was headed by the National Security Bureau and consisted of members from other relevant ministries and authorities including the foreign affairs, religious endowments, education, human rights and legal affairs ministries.

The committee focused on creating a rehabilitation and reintegration center to engage potential terrorists captured or arrested. The goal was not to create a detention facility, but rather a center for deradicalization and countering violent extremism programs. The committee, with the assistance and support of international partners, including the U.S., Saudi Arabia and the United Nations, was preparing to launch a pilot project in Sanaa. Drawing from Yemen's previous efforts and other similar centers' experiences (including from a visit to Mohammed bin Navef Counseling and Care Center in Saudi Arabia), the committee worked to develop comprehensive subprograms such as ideological counseling; physical, mental and spiritual health assessment; educational and vocational training; and reintegration, post-release and family welfare programs. However,

the security and political situation in Yemen after the 2014 coup caused deradicalization efforts to once again come to a complete halt.

MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST AQAP

In May 2011, during the Youth Revolution, AQAP was able (with only about 200 militants) to capture the city of Zinjibar and other areas in Abyan governorate. This attack was widely seen as an attempt by then-President Saleh to prove to the world that only he could provide stability in Yemen.

In May 2012, just three months after being elected, President Hadi ordered his first massive military campaign against AQAP called Operation Golden Swords, led by Maj. Gen. Salem Ali Qatan, commander of the Southern Military Region and the 31st Armored Brigade. Within a month, Zinjibar, Jaar and other areas in Abyan were liberated, although scattered AQAP militants remained. Unfortunately, on June 18, 2012, an AQAP suicide bomber assassinated Maj. Gen. Qatan in Aden. Frustratingly, Yemen's two main counterterrorism forces that had received the bulk of the U.S. support did not participate in the campaign, remaining in Sanaa mainly because of their commanders' reluctance and loyalty to Saleh. President Hadi has since, as part of restructuring the Armed Forces, replaced those commanders to ensure the loyalty of these elite and well-trained counterterrorism forces to the nation instead of to certain individuals.

In April 2014, the government launched another massive military campaign against AQAP in Shabwah and Abyan governorates. Those were successful as well; however, they were affected and derailed by the Houthis' escalation in Amran governorate leading up to the coup in Sanaa in September 2014.

LIBERATING AL MUKALLA

In April 2015, AQAP militants captured Al Mukalla, the major city in Hadhramout governorate — the largest governorate in Yemen. AQAP controlled the city for a year during the instability that followed the Houthis'

Many AQAP followers are not believers in al-Qaida's radical ideology, but are attracted by money rather than preaching.

Objectives of Yemen's Comprehensive —National Counterterrorism—

STRATEGY

- 1 Eradicate terrorism and eliminate the sources and root causes of extremism and its financing in all Yemeni governorates.
- 2 Reactivate the role of the security committees in all governorates and establish emergency units.
- 3 Assist the Military Committee, created by the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, to fulfill its mandate, especially the maintenance of stability and security.
- 4 Raise awareness of the adverse effects of terrorism and extremism.
- 5 Encourage citizens to assist and cooperate with the security and military apparatus in countering terrorism and extremism.
- 6 Protect society from the spread of extremism.
- 7 Eliminate terrorist organizations along with their members and leaders.

coup. During that time, AQAP managed to acquire substantial financial resources by looting banks and collecting taxes and fees from the city's port.

In April 2016, the government, supported by Arab coalition forces, liberated Al Mukalla and drove out AQAP. Since then, the government has been sweeping aside the remaining AQAP pockets in many governorates (including Aden, Shabwah and Abyan) and dismantling any other possible safe havens in Yemen.

AQAP's narratives, like those of its mother organization, are based on the false assertion that it is the "true" follower of Islam. AQAP uses both *takfiri* (accusing others of apostasy) narratives and conspiracy theories against the West to justify killing Muslims and non-Muslims. Before the Houthi coup, this radical ideology was not an effective local recruitment tool; financial incentives were more attractive.

In the past, many in the ranks of AQAP were foreigners — as many as 70 percent, according to President Hadi in an April 2014 speech. Many AQAP followers are not believers in al-Qaida's radical ideology, but are attracted by money rather than preaching.

After the Houthis embarked on their illegitimate quest to control Yemen, AQAP introduced a slightly different narrative. As they invaded other governorates, the Houthis carelessly labeled all those who opposed them as either *Dawaesh* (members

of Daesh), affiliates of al-Qaida, or simply takfiris. AQAP used this blind accusation as part of its revised propaganda to appeal to Sunni communities who otherwise were not interested in or influenced by al-Qaida radical ideology. Instead of focusing solely on labeling its opponents as apostates, AQAP portrays itself as the defender of Sunni Islam against the Shia Houthis, but still regards the government and the Arab coalition forces as its main targets.

As for the Houthis, they, too, have benefited from stirring up sectarianism in Yemen. They used AQAP and Daesh terrorist attacks against civilians in Sanaa as propaganda to recruit followers in what they called "jihad in the name of Allah." This was their justification when they invaded the southern governorates in 2015. Ironically, that is the same misused Islamic banner al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations use to justify killing others.

THE WAY FORWARD

The military option is not enough to defeat terrorism and violent extremism. The solution must be a comprehensive one. Military operations are and will continue to be an integral part of the fight against AQAP and other terrorist organizations in Yemen. However, without incorporating deradicalization and other development programs, a military approach alone will only exacerbate the problem.

The government is therefore determined to revive and implement its CNCS. This will allow it to provide more public services, to introduce more development projects, and to foster new relationships of trust and cooperation with its citizens. The government now controls more than 80 percent of Yemen and, despite facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, continues to rebuild liberated areas and to provide basic public services. Furthermore, Yemen will continue to conduct military operations against AQAP's safe havens and cooperate closely with the U.S. in all fields, including counterterrorism operations.

The U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism in 2012 stated that the Yemeni government under President Hadi "remained a strong U.S. counterterrorism partner," and Yemen reaffirms its readiness and willingness to remain so. It is imperative, however, to emphasize the need to reinforce Yemeni counterterrorism units and implement other deradicalization and development programs through support and assistance from Arab coalition countries, the U.S. and the international community. And most important, it is imperative to reinstate state institutions and to maintain stability, security and the ability to uphold the rule of law. •



STAFF BRIG. GEN. IBRAHIM ALNAIMAT DESCRIBES THE REGIONAL ROLE OF THE ROYAL JORDANIAN NAVY

JNIPATH STAFF

The Royal Jordanian Navy plays an important role in protecting Jordan's territorial waters. It maintains security in the Gulf of Aqaba by cooperating with Royal Saudi Naval Forces and the Egyptian Navy. In addition, the Jordanian Navy participates in Combined Maritime Force's Combined Task Force 152 to combat piracy along the coast of the Red Sea, which has a positive impact on global maritime security. *Unipath* interviewed Royal Jordanian Navy Cmdr. Staff Brig. Gen. Ibrahim Alnaimat during the August 2017 Regional Marine Symposium (RMS) hosted in Jordan. He spoke about the role and achievements of the Navy.

RIG. GEN. IBRAHIM ALNAIMAT: First of all, I would like to welcome the *Unipath* team. It is a great opportunity to have it here at the headquarters of the Jordanian Navy during RMS 17, hosted in Aqaba for the first time, which highlights

the strategic relations at the political and military level between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the United States. It is the duty of our nations' armed forces to interpret the goals of our politi-

cal leaders and implement them for the benefit of our nations. In Jordan, we are always proud of our relationship with our American friends, which reflects strategic coordination and cooperation in the Middle East's political and security realms. This region has witnessed difficult years of disturbances in many arenas, including economic and political instability that led a few countries to suffer inter-

nal conflict and violence, and some others to fall under the control of terrorist groups. Therefore, we must maintain our strategic relationship with our partners, teaming up to train together during peace to improve readiness to face any challenges and protect our homelands. As Jordanians, we happily seize chances to train within the region, because Jordan is such a small country with limited resources. That said, Jordan has well-trained and professional Armed Forces in all its branches that are comparable with the world's most advanced armies. Our leadership invests heavily in training and preparing the Army to be ready for any task.

The Jordanian Marines have successfully partnered with U.S. Marines in training and rearmament to benefit from the expertise of our experienced

partners in the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps. It was a great opportunity for us to prepare the Jordanian Navy and Marines.

Unipath: How important is it to partner with advanced militaries?

BRIG. GEN. ALNAIMAT: Jordanian Naval Forces are working closely with our partners in the U.S. Navy and Marines, and are delighted

with this strategic cooperation. We have sent a group of officers to work with the Joint Marine Task Force in Bahrain and have a liaison officer at the rank of colonel or above to coordinate and exchange information at the headquarters



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of the U.S. 5th Fleet. Despite the small size of the Jordanian Naval Forces and the lack of warships that can operate on the high seas, we managed to send a group of Jordanian officers to lead the Combined Task Force 152 for a yearlong mission. It was our honor to succeed the Kuwaiti Navy's leadership of the task force in September 2016. During this year of leading the task force, the chief of staff, the chief of operations, the head of the department of planning, alternate officers in the operating room and a group of noncommissioned officers are all from Jordan.

On this occasion, I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to our partners in the coalition forces for their great effort within the region as we work together, exchange experiences and share resources among ourselves. We worked as a team to fulfill our mission; we don't have the big ships, but we have the maritime experience and the professional fighters who can carry out duties through the use of partnerships and teamwork.

We also have a major role to play within the region in combating piracy in the Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Aden and on the coast of Somalia, where we have prepared seven inspection teams in cooperation with the U.S. Navy. In the past few years, we've sent two teams, each of which stays for 90 days and operates on U.S. ships in combined task forces 151 and 152 and has carried out numerous tasks in apprehending pirates. This has been a successful experience for both parties, as we have benefited from the exchange of experience and

tactics. This is one of several examples of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's efforts to establish security and stability in the region and to protect global trade.

Unipath: What roles do Jordanian Soldiers perform on American ships? Do they contribute only military experience, or is their knowledge of language and culture also important?

BRIG. GEN. ALNAIMAT: Knowledge of the language and traditions of the area of operations greatly impacts our approach to understanding and combating the enemy's mindset and plans. When a group of suspected pirates was arrested near the coast of Somalia, they claimed that they were fishermen and had nothing to do with piracy and terror. At the same time, they were speaking Arabic to each other. One of the Royal Marines listened to their conversation and heard them say that their weapons were hidden under fishing gear; they thought it would be impossible to find them. Thanks to the Jordanian officers, the weapons cache and the communication equipment were found in short order, and the pirates were shocked when the Jordanian officer confronted them with their plans. There are many stories like these that emphasize the benefits of cooperation between friendly forces.

Unipath: As commander of the Royal Jordanian Navy, what kind of challenges do you face?

BRIG. GEN. ALNAIMAT: The Jordanian Navy faces the same threats and challenges as other navies in the region, but some challenges are particular to our country. The biggest challenge is that we have entered a new stage in which the Daesh terrorist organization has been besieged and defeated in the countries of the region, and now its fighters want to escape. We must remain vigilant and deny them access to maritime trade routes they use to smuggle fighters and weapons. We have the power to protect our waterways. For the record, there have been no reported cases of anyone penetrating our territorial waters. In addition, there are some terrorist groups operating in the region that are under substantial military pressure. This may push these groups to seek access to our land by infiltrating our waterways. At the same time, we are closely monitoring the activities of terrorists to prevent them from infiltrating our waters or territory.

Unipath: Jordan is near Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Do these three nations have maritime cooperation agreements to protect these shared waterways?

BRIG. GEN. ALNAIMAT: We have regional cooperation with countries bordering on the Gulf of Aqaba; we connect with them daily and share information. We also have direct contact when necessary and have liaison officers to facilitate the task and achieve our shared goal of preserving the security and stability of the Gulf of Aqaba to make it a crime-free zone.

Unipath: RMS 2017 was a great success, with numerous countries participating and discussing a wide array of topics. What is the significance of the Jordan Armed Forces (JAF) participating in an event like this?

BRIG. GEN. ALNAIMAT: Military exercises help participants develop capacity and gain experience. They also give us the chance to learn about different methods and techniques we can use to benefit the JAF. We participate in more than one program and more than one joint exercise.

Furthermore, about 2 1/2 years ago, we formed a great partnership between the Jordanian 77th Royal Marine Battalion and the U.S. Marine Corps. We also have joint training for counterterrorism and piracy teams within the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility, where they co-train with the Royal Marine Battalion. I also have to recognize the Eager Lion exercise of 2017. This event builds a tremendous bond among participating nations. In addition to unifying all nations' understanding of military terms and concepts, promoting joint work and helping leadership plan exercises, we develop exercise scenarios to simulate realistic potential threats and ways to combat them. We hope to develop the exercise through the development of new simulations and scenarios. We seek to employ all the capabilities of Jordan in the next exercise, in which civil institutions and the Armed Forces will work together as a team. This kind of collaboration is very important for us to face natural disasters and man-made crises in our region. RMS, which we were honored to host in Agaba, is the result of the enthusiastic collaboration between the U.S. and Jordanian Marines, which resulted in great success. A large number of our brothers and friends were present to share ideas and proposals to develop training curricula and create professional marine corps capable of confronting the threats in the region. I thank the leadership of the U.S. Marines for its great work in the success and development of this symposium, and I would like to thank our brothers in the region for their attendance and participation. I hope to see greater participation in 2018.

Unipath: What other joint naval exercises has Jordan participated in?

BRIG. GEN. ALNAIMAT: Along with Eager Lion, there are many marine activities in which we participate. At the regional level, there is an annual Jordanian-Egyptian exercise that began in 2015 under the name Aqaba 15 hosted by the Arab Republic of Egypt. Aqaba 16 was hosted in Jordan. This demonstrates the cooperation between Jordanian and Egyptian naval forces to protect multinational trade in the Gulf of Aqaba. Through this exercise, we identify and implement solutions to potential threats that the region may face, and each year, we have a new scenario that corresponds to conventional and nonconventional threats. By nonconventional threats, I mean those relating to terrorism.

Unipath: What advice can you give to naval officers in the area about the importance of the partnership?

BRIG. GEN. ALNAIMAT: My advice — to Jordanians and our allies — is to work together. The threats we face can't be addressed in the traditional manner through a single state. No country in the world can protect global navigation lanes on its own because that could lead to a protracted war, major losses and the deployment of its troops and weapons in all parts of the world. A more logical idea is to work as a team by using partners' resources to bolster security. We must have allies and friends to meet all the challenges in the region and in other locations where terrorist threats are a concern. Protecting our borders is the priority; thus, we must work together to devote our capabilities and techniques to each country when necessary. Each state should offer something specific to the rest of the nations to create an integrated force capable of defeating the enemy. •



DEFENDING NORTHERN EGYPT

THE MOHAMMED NAGUIB MILITARY BASE IS THE MIDDLE EAST'S LARGEST

EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE | PHOTOS BY REUTERS



gyptian military capability is based on foundations that are deeply rooted in the country's military
 doctrine, which each member of the Armed Forces believes in, whether in victory or martyrdom.

After that comes the military's possession of advanced technological systems of armaments, training, and technical and administrative security to maintain the highest levels of readiness and preparation. This allows the military to carry out its mission to protect the pillars of Egyptian national security from every strategic angle.

These foundations are accompanied by Egypt's possession of a highly developed industrial and productive base that helps the Armed Forces realize self-sufficiency, satisfy the requirements of the domestic market, and ease the burden on Egyptian citizens.

The Mohammed Naguib Military Base is among the latest successes to add to the list, both in terms of quality and quantity. Founded within the framework of the Armed Forces'

comprehensive development and updated strategy, the base replaces the military city in the El Hammam region established in 1993.

Supported by new administrative and technical units and occupied by units from Egypt's northern military region, the new base reinforces the country's ability to secure vital regions west of Alexandria along the north coast of the Mediterranean sea. The region includes El Dabaa Nuclear Power Plant, oil fields, the port of Marsa Al Hamra, and New El Alamein.

Military commanders ordered the transformation of the old military city into an integrated base named after Gen. Mohammed Naguib, Egypt's first president following the dissolution of the monarchy in 1953.

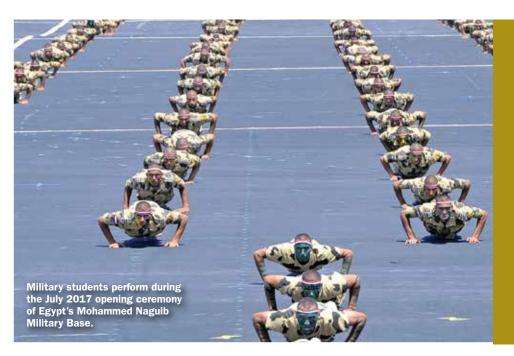
This epic overhaul engaged the Egyptian military's engineering corps for two years. Engineers built 1,155 buildings for units stationed at the base, developed and widened 72 kilometers of roads inside and outside the base, and built four main gates and eight interior gates. The project also included new buildings to reposition a heavy tank battalion with about 451 modern tanks from Amreya. Units from the King Mariout region were also repositioned to complete the forces at the base.

For combat training, 72 integrated grounds were established, including a complex of specialized training areas, small arms firing ranges, and electronic tactical firing ranges that accommodate the latest shooting simulation systems.

The Mohammed Naguib Base's administrative development included erecting a residential city for joint exercises, consisting of 14 fully furnished buildings for officers, 15 buildings for noncommissioned officers (NCO) and two upgraded and developed buildings equipped to accommodate 1,000 Soldiers.

In addition, a multipurpose hall inside the base was developed to include a mess hall for officers and another for the other ranks, as well as lecture and training halls. The base's main club was upgraded with a swimming pool and gymnasium providing the most modern sports and recreational technologies. The military hospital was improved to accommodate 50 beds and the latest medical equipment and devices. A veterinary clinic and laboratory were also established. The base's bread production unit was updated with six gas lines, replacing four old solar-powered lines.

Modern amenities inside the base include a multipurpose conference hall that seats 1,600, linked to a theater equipped with the latest technology, a wargames center, language and computer labs, and a museum dedicated to the late President

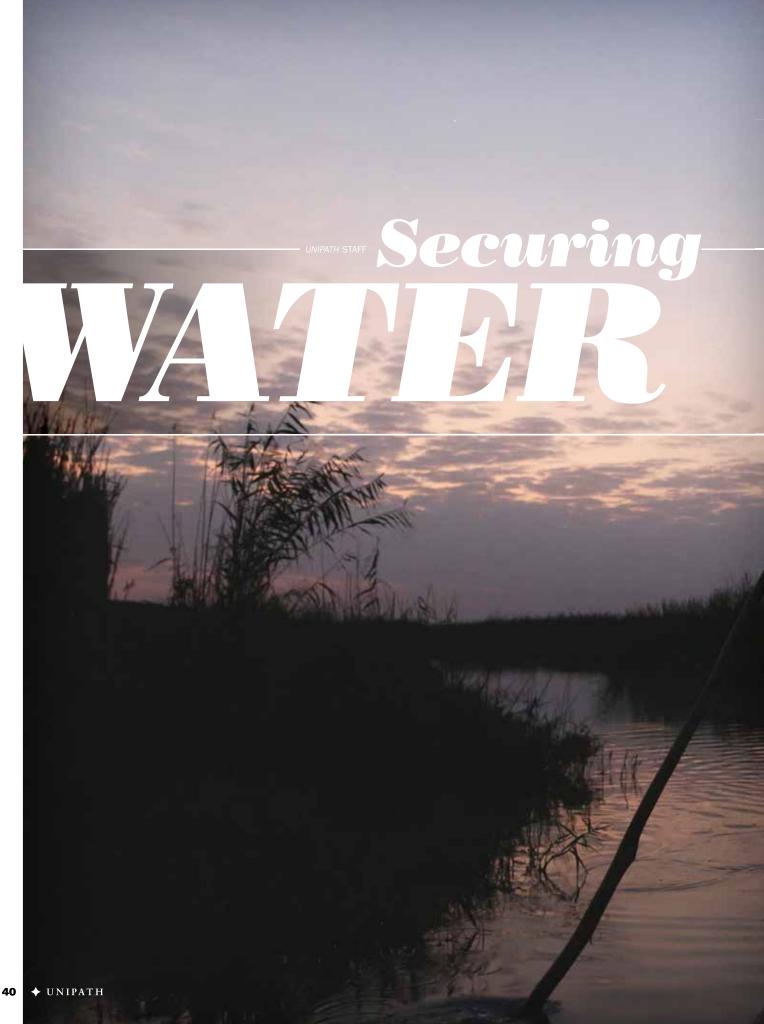


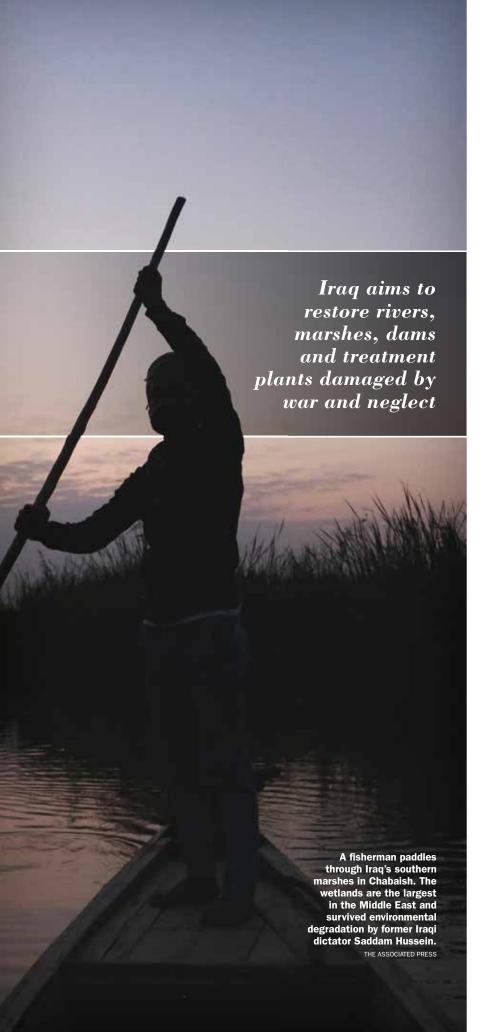
Naguib. Also on site is a mosque that holds more than 2,000 worshipers.

An athletic village includes a covered sports hall, Olympicsize soccer field, officers club, and an NCO club. It is equipped with a swimming pool, six open fields, and courts for basketball, volleyball and handball.

The new base officially opened in July 2017 with a ceremony attended by leaders from Bahrain, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Egypt calls the complex "the "largest military base in the Middle East."

The attendance of numerous Arab leaders at the ceremony — which included acrobatic displays and rope climbing — was a sign of Arab unity, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi proclaimed. •





he historic name for Iraq was Mesopotamia, which means "the land between the two rivers." The world is indebted to this land as the cradle of civilization, established on the banks of the great rivers Euphrates and Tigris. Those same rivers are equally critical to modern Iraq as an economic lifeline, not only supplying water for irrigation, but harboring millions of fish to feed the population. In the face of wars and devastation caused by Daesh, Iraq's challenge is to sustain and restore this vital resource. Unipath interviewed Iraqi Minister of Water Resources Dr. Hassan Janabi, who described his ministry's achievements in trying to protect these pillars of economic security in Iraq and the Middle East.

UNIPATH: Iraqis have lived through many water crises in the past that harmed the economy. How vulnerable is the country today to such crises?

MINISTER JANABI: Iraq has long endured water shortages and natural disasters. Droughts and floods have struck Iraq in different periods of its history. What has changed is that the rivers are no longer regulated solely by natural fluctuations — their flows are controlled by Iraq and its neighbors Turkey, Syria and Iran through a massive network of dams that control flow. This represents a huge change in the hydrological cycle and greatly impacts water flow. We notice the change not only during the peak seasonal flows — when we've observed a deterioration in water quality — but also during periods of intense heat and during flood cycles that have long played a critical role in renewing and nourishing the soil, maintaining a diversity of living creatures and resisting desertification. Today we are more susceptible to water shortages even during peak water output.

UNIPATH: How does the Water Ministry deal with desertification and climate change?

"CLIMATE CHANGE AND DESERTIFICATION ARE BEST COMBATED AT THE LEVEL OF NATIONAL POLICY." – Minister Janabi





Iraqi boys herd water buffalo in the Euphrates River in Najaf. Protecting the river is a priority of Iraq's Ministry of Water Resources.

REUTERS

A worker pumps concrete underground in an emergency operation to reinforce Mosul Dam.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINISTER JANABI: Climate change and desertification are best combated at the level of national policy. This requires political and economic stability so we can finance such programs and establish effective strategies to manage growing demand for water and enforce the nation's goals.

Iraq is a member of the United Nation Framework on Climate Change as well as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. We are very committed and obey these treaties despite the challenges we face in the war against terror and the drastic reduction in national income.

As a ministry, we are facing a critical challenge of water shortages and low water levels in the rivers due to high demand and the fact that our water infrastructure and irrigation systems are outdated. They were designed based on conditions that existed in the 1950s and 1960s and must be updated and rehabilitated to match the realities of today. Therefore, we established a new strategy for water resources and farmland effective through the year 2035, and we are working hard to execute this strategy, despite the financial difficulties.

The ministry aims to focus on small projects that will be placed into service as soon as we complete them. These are coordinated with our overall strategy and estimates of available water resources, even though neighboring countries determine how much water ultimately passes through our two rivers. We think that executing our strategy will play a positive role in climate change policy. In addition, the ministry is working to support projects to establish green belts and resist desertification.

UNIPATH: Your name has become synonymous with marshland restoration, particularly in southern Iraq. Can you tell us about that plan?

MINISTER JANABI: Our primary mission is the preservation of marshlands. This means allocating sufficient water to allow Iraqi marshlands to flourish. This provides an essential service for the communities reliant on the marshes and maintains environmental balance, wildlife diversity and food supplies. This is above all a response to a United Nations declaration that added Iraqi marshlands





"I HAVE FAITH IN THE IRAQI PEOPLE TO PASS
THROUGH THESE DIFFICULT TIMES AND EMERGE
VICTORIOUS ON THE OTHER SIDE." - Minister Januari



A fisherman casts his net into the Shatt al-Arab near Basra.

to the list of the world heritage sites. Therefore, we guarantee to supply sufficient water from our annual water budget. We view the marshlands as a water consumer and treat them the same way we treat the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. We are enthusiastic about our commitment, despite the violations and competition from local and regional actors.

We think the Iraqi marshlands have economic, cultural and sentimental value, and everyone is responsible for protecting them. That means restricting any pollution and combating illegal fishing and hunting that sometimes entail the use of poisons and electrical shocks to harvest fish. Such practices are actually global and addressed in international treaties so that all of humanity can fight against them.

UNIPATH: The world has heard about the dangers facing Mosul Dam in the past few years, particularly

during the Daesh occupation. What is the dam's condition today?

MINISTER JANABI: We have a known problem with the Mosul Dam's foundations owing to geologic weakness of its soil at various depths under the dam. This was diagnosed before the dam was built. In fact, the dam was designed and built with tunnels underneath so that concrete could be injected into its foundation. The concrete injection operation has persisted since 1986.

Currently, the dam maintenance and injection operation continues with the help of the Italian company Trevi under the supervision of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the support of the Corps of Engineers for our ministry to strengthen the dam's foundation.



REUTERS

UNIPATH: Do you have a plan to help the Iraqi citizens of Basra affected by environmental catastrophes linked to the rivers?

MINISTER JANABI: Basra is the most impacted area in Iraq, whether sentimentally or economically. Wars destroyed it, and it has suffered from pollution, sunken ships and the water shortages from the large sources that feed the Shatt al-Arab river, such as the Karoun, Karkha, Tigris and Euphrates. As a result, saltwater from the Arabian Gulf has intruded into the Shatt al-Arab.

The problems in Basra include a shortage of drinking water that requires building large water plants. That is an issue handled by other government agencies; all that we can do here as the Ministry of Water Resources is to support and encourage these government agencies to take necessary steps. The second problem is the deteriorating quality of the Shatt al-Arab river from a reduction of freshwater reaching it from rivers farther upstream.

We are doing our best to supply Basra with about 75 cubic meters of water per second. We hope the Iranians match this quota. If Iran commits to that amount, we can save the Shatt al-Arab and its environment from total disaster. Until that happens, our ministry established an irrigation canal that runs parallel to the banks of Shatt al-Arab. This project is about to be completed, and we have allocated water for this purpose.

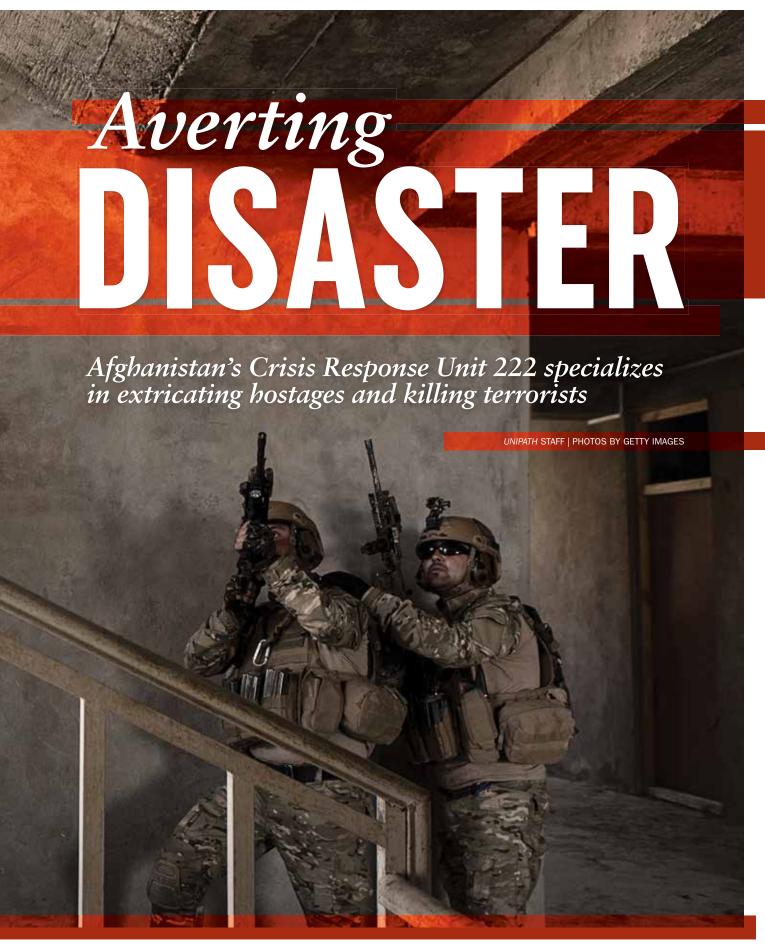
UNIPATH: What are your plans to restore the area recently liberated from Daesh?

MINISTER JANABI: Freshwater treatment plants were liberated and secured; however, we discovered sabotage on these plants by the hands of terrorists. Our initial estimate of the damage approached \$600 million.

Daesh used water as a weapon of war by flooding villages, towns and farmland and destroying the Ramadi and Fallujah dam and the only canal that supplied irrigation water to the Baghdad belt. Terrorists also occupied Mosul Dam and tried to control Haditha Dam, but the citizens of Haditha prevailed against Daesh. Daesh also controls branches of the Euphrates in Syria and the Al-Tabqa Dam, which exposes Iraqis to great danger. I would like to thank our Armed Forces that moved swiftly to retake Mosul Dam before the terrorists destroyed it and also secured other water infrastructure. I believe we've passed through the dangerous period and are using our humble resources to make improvements. Money recently became available to repair and renovate Mosul Dam and the structures that regulate river water flowing into Lake Habbaniya.

I have faith in the Iraqi people to pass through these difficult times and emerge victorious on the other side. Iraqis are a strong and patient people. This was obvious after the liberation of northern Iraq from Daesh, when farmers started clearing their fields of war materiel to ready them for the planting season. Their lives returned to normal within a few months.





ragedy struck Kabul, Afghanistan, in March 2017 when terrorists wearing white laboratory coats assaulted the Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan Hospital with the intention of killing hundreds of patients and medical staff.

Within minutes, Crisis Response Unit 222 — a specially trained counterterrorism force of the Afghan National Police — skillfully weaved its way in armored cars through heavy traffic to help rescue dozens

of hostages at the hospital.

Known as CRU 222, this elite force has one of the most demanding jobs in Afghanistan. Its missions include responding — preferably within five minutes — to hostage rescue scenarios in which terrorists besiege places like hotels, airports and schools.

Marinejegerkommandoen who are operating under a "train, advise and assist" mission dedicated to stabilizing Afghanistan.

The physical and psychological demands on the unit are arduous. CRU 222 training lasts for several months with an intensity that compels nearly one in seven candidates to drop out before completion of the course.

"We get better training than the commandos, but we work together," CRU 222 Commander Lt. Col. Abdul Raqib Mubariz said in a 2017 interview. "We

recruit from all over the country."

The unit gained national prominence in July 2014 when gunfire and explosions near Kabul Airport alerted security forces that a suicide attack was underway. In a four-hour fight, CRU 222 killed all five terrorists with a precision that spared the lives of civilians on site.

In gratitude for their bravery in eliminating the terrorists at the airport, hundreds of Afghans welcomed the returning troops with a display of national flags and flower bouquets.

"It feels wonderful to have such a professional and skilled police force in our country who are adept at thwarting major insurgent attacks," Kabul resident Noor-ul-Anwaar Rohani told the magazine *Afghan Zariza*. "Now we are not so heavily dependent on foreign forces to protect us from insurgents."

CRU 222 has also helped

defeat terrorists assaulting the American University of Afghanistan, the Iraqi Embassy in Kabul, the Hotel Inter-Continental Kabul and the Kabul Serena Hotel. In the case of the embassy incident in July 2017, the unit rushed embassy staffers to safety while repulsing the terrorists.

Another role of CRU 222 is arresting dangerous criminal and terrorist suspects in and around



Crisis Response Unit 222 conducts training. (left and right photos)

Founded by the Afghan Ministry of the Interior in 2009 with a few hundred men, CRU 222 has grown to 7,000 personnel stationed across the country. Its high-profile work is equally high risk: Nearly 100 of its troops have been killed during intense firefights in which terrorists sometimes detonate explosive vests.

The unit has fine-tuned its skills with specialized training from NATO troops, such as Norwegian



Kabul, some captured when citizens tipped off the Afghan National Police using the nation's "119" emergency phone line. Among those arrested are major drug smugglers.

Even though most CRU personnel operate close to their regional bases, the force also deploys assault, surveillance and support squadrons by helicopter across Afghanistan with the help of the Afghan Special Mission Wing.

Little of this would have been possible without support from international military partners who realize global and regional security is a coalition effort. Norwegians, Australians, Britons, Americans and New Zealanders have all helped train and equip CRU 222.

"The Afghan police special units are visible, relevant and highly in demand. In view of the challenging security situation and the continuing need for counterterrorist capacity, Norway will continue its tactical and strategic support to the Afghan special police," Norwegian Minister of Defense Ine Eriksen Søreide said as the country recommitted to training CRU 222 in 2017.

CRU 222's specialized training complements

that of other units in the Afghan National Security Forces. For example, when CRU 222 arrived to confront the terrorists at Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan Hospital, CRU 222's leader consulted with Afghan National Army commandos to ensure that tactical differences between the two units didn't compromise the clearance operation at the hospital.

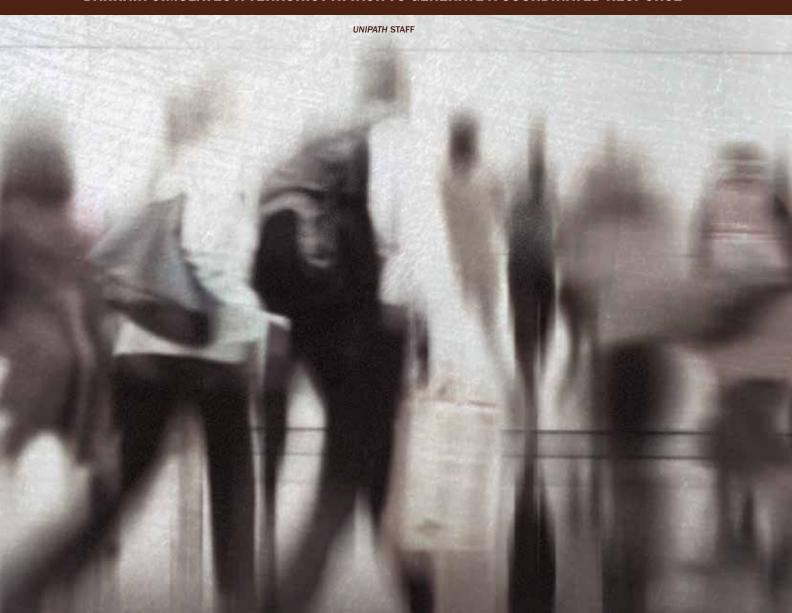
For high-ranking commanders such as Gen. John Nicholson, head of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, CRU 222 has been a heroic success in the country, responsible for saving thousands of lives over the years.

"Crisis Response Unit 222 responds to all highprofile attacks in Kabul. It successfully contained the terror attack against the American University in Kabul on August 24, saving the lives of over 60 hostages and hundreds more who were trapped on the university grounds," Gen. Nicholson noted in a statement to the U.S. Congress in February 2017. "This same unit also responded to the October 11 twin attacks against Shia mosques, rescuing 70 hostages." ◆

Sources: The New York Times, recoilweb.com, Afghan Zariza, Voice of America, Norwegian Ministry of Defense.

Training AGAINST AGAINST TERRORISTS

BAHRAIN SIMULATES A TERRORIST ATTACK TO GENERATE A COORDINATED RESPONSE



o prepare for terrorist threats that target civilian gatherings, security forces in the kingdom of Bahrain conducted an exercise to restore control of Seef Mall and free hostages quickly with the least number of casualties.

A rigorous plan simulated reality on the ground with the arrival of security forces, liberation of hostages and capture of terrorists. About 825 personnel belonging to all Bahraini security forces, including the Bahrain Defense Force, Ministry of Interior and National Guard, took part in the six-hour exercise watched by observers from the United Arab Emirates, the United States, France and Britain.

The choice of the exercise scenario — a popular shopping mall with more than 350 tenants — was deliberate. Terrorist groups disregard innocent lives, as demonstrated by similar attacks in many parts of the world. For example, terrorists belonging to Daesh attacked Sayedat-al-Nagah Church in central Baghdad in 2010 and randomly killed worshippers. They also conducted a media campaign on social networking sites to spread fear and send the message that security forces have lost control of the country. In a bloody copycat attack in Nairobi in 2013, Somali terrorists in al-Shabaab attacked the largest mall in Kenya, murdered innocent people and took hostages.

The Seef Mall exercise started at 2:30 a.m. on December 5, 2017. Observers, including the kingdom's senior security and military commanders, convened in the mall's top level to watch the action below. The overall commander was His Royal Highness Brig. Gen. Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, head of the Royal Guard.

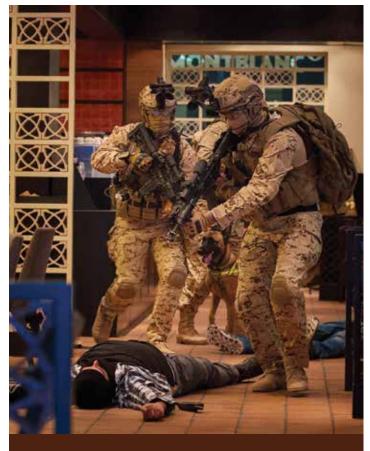
The exercise started with a briefing by His Royal Highness Maj. Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, commander of the Bahrain Royal Guard Special Force. He described the objectives: Free hostages held in the mall, test the speed of Bahraini security forces, evaluate collaboration among police and military units, protect innocent lives and respect human rights.

"Terrorism has become a preoccupation of the whole world, and is of particular concern in the kingdom of Bahrain," Sheikh Khalid said. "This has compelled us to be at the highest degree of



readiness to combat international terrorism and build international partnerships with our allies in the United States, Britain and France to benefit from their experience in combating terrorism and protecting civilian lives. We must also intensify joint training efforts to protect the lives and security of our citizens."

Sheikh Khalid explained the exercise scenario: A regional state was supporting subversive and terrorist activities by manipulating underage youths and using them to smuggle weapons and explosives into Bahrain. That led to a terrorist group called the al-Ashtar Brigade to use 200 people to attack security forces with Molotov cocktails. Around the same time, counterterrorism units received information about gunfire inside Seef Mall.



Bahraini forces clear Seef Mall at a counterterrorism exercise in December 2017. KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

THE EXERCISE BEGINS

The mall appeared as bustling as usual. The corridors were teeming with people. Women gathered inside a store. Young men strolled near a coffee shop, some pecking at their mobile phones, others conversing with one another. Suddenly, a masked man in black ripped open his backpack, pulled out an automatic rifle and started firing randomly at shoppers. The screams of women, cries of the wounded and the sound of shooting were heard from several directions within the building.

The terrorists acted heinously toward innocent people. They beat the injured, abused women and continued to spray gunfire. The smell of gunpowder filled the air, empty bullet shells covered the floor, and bodies of the dead and injured were strewn on the floors, giving the exercise the eerie appearance of a real crisis.

Five minutes later, police cars approached the mall from several directions. The terrorists opened fire on security personnel who had taken positions near the complex entrances. They called for support from the Ministry of the Interior's Special Security Force Command (SSFC). A tense five minutes passed inside the complex, a period filled with screams and shouts.

Suddenly, shots were heard from the direction of entrance number 1, and one of the terrorists was killed as the first group of these paramilitary counterterrorism forces marched into the mall. They maintained clockwork discipline as they thoroughly searched the surroundings, weapons at the ready, prepared to eliminate the terrorist threat.

Meanwhile, a second formation of the SSFC arrived from another direction, cleared terrorists from much of the mall's ground level and joined with their colleagues from the initial unit to advance to the mall's upper level. Eventually, however, intense fire from the terrorists compelled the unit to call for support from the National Guard of Bahrain.

As they waited for more firepower to arrive — 15 minutes from the start of the terrorist attack — the forces from the Ministry of the Interior swept the part of the mall they occupied, isolating any remaining terrorists, removing weapons and checking for dead and wounded. The force included female officers who issued directions to female victims.

REQUESTING MORE SUPPORT

The National Guard arrived at Seef Mall an hour after the attack started. Those troops secured the site and freed the SSFC to clear the rest of the complex. The paramilitary troops advanced further through the mall until they were frozen in place by a horrible sight: Terrorists were pointing their guns at the heads of two hostages, threatening to kill them if the troops approached any closer.



The standoff was the cue to summon the Royal Guard Special Force. Hostage rescue is among the unit's specialties.

It executed its mission with a display that dazzled observers. The Soldiers came equipped with state-of-the-art special operations technology, such as night vision goggles, encrypted radio communication and lightweight helmets fitted with high-definition cameras to transmit live pictures to command headquarters.

The special troops of the Royal Guard stormed the position so suddenly that the terrorists had little time to react. In a coordinated raid of high precision, they killed the terrorists and freed the hostages. Bomb-sniffing dogs ensured that the terrorists hadn't left any explosives behind to threaten the rescue operation.

Many other operations occurred at the same time the compound was secured: completing the screening process, detaining suspects, conducting an investigation, collecting crime scene evidence, and transporting wounded to a field hospital set up on site by the Bahrain Defense Force-Royal Medical Services. Field hospital staff treated wounds and administered IVs before ambulances arrived to transfer serious cases to nearby hospitals.

Security forces transferred suspects and terrorists to a collection point in the mall parking lot to process their arrests and detention.

At 4 a.m., after visiting all the exercise sites and the forces' sites outside the complex, Brig. Gen. Sheikh Nasser delivered a speech in which he thanked participating forces.

"Thank you for joining us. This exercise was a dream, and we achieved it. You saw the high performance and the high capabilities of our security forces in carrying out their mission. We are honored to be here tonight to witness this important exercise. We have all seen the capabilities of the field commanders and the potential of soldiers and officers in performing their duties.

"These exercises provide valuable opportunities to learn about the forces' readiness and practice the use of modern tactics in the execution of joint missions between the state security organizations," he said. "They also send a message of reassurance to our citizens and make our leaders proud of our fighters' performance. Indeed, His Majesty (may God protect him) encourages and supports these military exercises."



UNIPATH MET WITH HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS MAJ. SHEIKH KHALID BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA DURING THE EXERCISE TO GLEAN MORE DETAILS ABOUT BAHRAIN'S COUNTERTERRORISM PREPARATIONS.

Unipath: The world is witnessing major challenges as terrorist groups target civilians. Please talk to us about the Seef Mall rescue operation and why you chose this scenario.

Sheikh Khalid: Terrorist threats represent the nature of modern nonconventional warfare. which calls for the adoption of counterterrorism tactics by the military. As everyone knows, terrorist attacks on civilian targets are easy to plan and execute, because they are public places that do not maintain lines of defense or stationed troops. This is also because the enemy in this case are militia gangs, small in number and equipped with light weapons, whose objective is to kill the largest number of civilians and instill fear among innocent people. Moreover, the explosives they use are homemade and do not require large budgets, yet are capable of disrupting security in any stable state. There are terrorist attacks every day on residential compounds, towers, schools and places of worship, where security forces face immense difficulties because of the presence of civilians.

As Special Forces, we train for combat in residential areas. We have training sites that contain small one-room and two-room houses, but when we talk about a terrorist attack on a residential compound with more than 100 houses, the challenge will be much greater than what the force has trained for. We must, therefore, think in a much broader sense by devising a realistic scenario. So, we will need larger forces.

We begin with the Ministry of the Interior's first response force, which will examine the situation and determine if it requires calling in the National Guard's second response force and, if security commanders find it necessary, getting military assistance. This means that we do not only execute the exercise from a tactical perspective, but also from a legal perspective. In other words, the Ministry of the Interior and its organizations are responsible for the country's security, and it is up

to that ministry to request intervention by the Armed Forces. Our main objective for this exercise is also to test the ability of our security organizations to work together during a crisis without prior coordination. So, if we say we have five forces designated for combating terrorism in Bahrain, these must work together as one team, whether during normal daily drills for sharing experiences and planning or during major exercises like the exercise to regain control of the Seef commercial complex, which will involve joint action by the forces and the command center. So, the goal of this exercise is to be ready for the worst.

Unipath: The world is witnessing several terrorist assaults, whether it was terrorist control of the city of Mosul in Iraq, the Paris attacks, or the lone wolf attacks in the U.S. and Europe. Do you follow these events so that Bahraini special operations forces can learn from them?

Sheikh Khalid: We have established a center for counterterrorism that includes a unit for coordinating between different parts. It also includes a research and development unit that addresses tactics, equipment and armament. The third unit specializes in monitoring terrorist attacks that take place around the world, whether in Europe, the Middle East or the United States. The unit examines the details of an attack and how it is handled, and it also looks for errors and how to avoid them and benefit from those countries' plans to restore security. This unit closely followed anti-terrorist operations in Iraq and the Iraqi Armed Forces' plans to liberate cities. I have also followed the terrorist attacks in Paris and countries of the region and have put together a complete assessment for them. We have also studied the terrorist attack on the shopping mall in Nairobi. This is why we decided to conduct an exercise inside the Seef shopping mall, to make sure we avoid the mistakes that occurred in those terrorist attacks.

Unipath: What tasks does the Special Force train for?

Sheikh Khalid: We have made well-known contributions to the Arab coalition's efforts. in Yemen, and we also make daily contributions within the kingdom. Let me talk about the Royal Guard Special Force. It was initially a rapid response regiment designated to be present anywhere His Majesty visited. However, we developed the capabilities and equipment of this force to carry out broader tasks. This is in addition to its main role of protecting His Majesty and government processions. We carry out special tasks and continue to train daily. Our mission is different than that of the rest of the Armed Forces. We focus on tactics for combating terrorism and freeing hostages, in addition to dismantling terrorist cells, drying up sources of funding terrorism and foiling terrorist attacks before they occur.

Unipath: We witnessed the outstanding performance of the Royal Guard Special Force. How pleased are you with this performance, and what are your plans to further develop the force?

Sheikh Khalid: I do not stop at any point, even when I see that my men have reached the highest levels. I have four fighters who received the highest medal in Bahrain, the Medal of Bravery, which is a source of pride for the kingdom. The medal is awarded to a Soldier who performs an honorable action or gives up his life to protect the interests and security of the kingdom. Those men have performed heroically during battles and made Bahrain proud before our brothers in the Arab coalition. But despite reaching a high level of performance and professionalism, we always strive to be better. Especially in the ranks of special forces, when a commander sees that he has reached the highest levels and decides to stop training, his forces will begin to decline. My most important goal is to continue training and remain committed to progress and keeping pace with developed countries. We have field visits and joint exercises, and we ask international experts to visit so we can benefit from their experiences in the development and modernization of tactics and equipment.

Unipath: With which international special forces do you train and what is the importance of training with allies?

Sheikh Khalid: As the kingdom of Bahrain's Armed Forces, and as forces of the Gulf Cooperation Council, we have many military exercises and many alliances, whether with Gulf countries or Eastern or Western countries. So, we work with many countries, not only in special operations, but also in all types of armed forces. We share experience and have liaison officers with other countries. This works in the interest of increasing our personnel's military experience but it also increases the experience of our allies, from the perspective of international relations, who learn about the traditions and values of our society. So, the benefit is mutual.

Unipath: As a security and military commander, what are the most important things that you wish to achieve through this exercise?

Sheikh Khalid: We wish to assess the response times and coordination between security organizations and make sure that no violation of human rights is committed by security personnel. We have not heard of preparations by the joint forces taking place before the exercise, because our goal is not a military parade. We were hoping to make this exercise appear as a real emergency to assess the performance of our security apparatus. Our brothers in the Bahrain Defense Force-Royal Medical Services said that they could erect a field hospital in 45 minutes and tried to begin work before the start of exercises, but I refused and said that we want to assess performance and learn from mistakes. We were also keen on working with public prosecutors and asked them for observers to assess the performance of the security forces and for advice on prevention of human rights violations. We have also asked our partners in the United States, Britain and France for help by providing international observers to assess security forces' performance and offer advice to avoid future mistakes. We look forward to receiving their reports and applying them. I would like to commend the role of our international partners who work with us on developing our military and security capabilities.



SENIOR LEADER PROFILE

AROYUU Maj. Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa commands the elite Bahrain Royal Guard Special Force UNIPATH STAFF

embers of the Bahrain Royal Guard Special Force give every impression of being gentlemen warriors. Visitors to their base experience warm smiles and friendly greetings from the tall, well-built troops with sharp uniforms—qualities indistinguishable from those of their young leader, His Royal Highness Maj. Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, who focuses on building coherence and tolerance among officers and soldiers.

Sheikh Khalid is building an elite, brigade-size force dedicated to Bahrain's security and stability. His role model in this endeavor is none other than his father, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

"My role model is the king, he raised me to love the nation and adhere to a Soldier's principles from the days of my childhood. He seeded the love of the military inside us — me and my brother, Nasser — and he taught us that an honorable Soldier sacrifices for his homeland and flag," the sheikh said.

"I felt pride whenever I saw His Majesty wearing his military uniform, which inspired my dream to join the military. Many children see themselves as doctors, engineers and pilots, yet, since my early days, I saw myself as a Soldier who courageously defends the nation and its people."

After completing high school, Sheikh Khalid strove to achieve this childhood dream. He enrolled in one of the world's most prestigious military institutions. Despite his young age, he headed to England in 2007 to attend the British Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst.

His Royal Highness emphasized the need for strong security relationships and military alliances to prevail against terrorist threats backed by a regional state, the goal of which is instability and chaos in the Gulf region. The U.S. has been a vital player in fighting this threat, he said, citing Bahrain's hosting of the U.S. 5th Fleet, which provides security for the entire region. He also appreciates the roles of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to work as one team.

"We have a long-term relationship with our American allies that adheres to the well-known 'Arab Knights' principle in that we never forget our friends and those who support us during difficult times," Sheikh Khalid said. "When we make a friend, we make it for lifetime. We also enjoy a great relationship with our brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council, which resembles a relationship among family members. We share faith, blood and common goals.

He added: "The U.S. partnership is strategic, and we are keen to make it stronger. It is a reliable, truthful partnership that has lasted over 100 years."

Building a professional force with advanced capabilities requires unique leaders able to engrave the unit's principles on the hearts of each member. Equally important, the nation's citizens must trust in this unit's ability to defend them. Therefore, Sheikh Khalid focuses on instilling professionalism, skills and teamwork.

"Despite our reaching a satisfactory point in our training, I always strive to aim higher," he said. "No matter how far we have reached in terms of professionalism and performance, we always have ambitions to be the best."

Any leader who rests on his laurels and pauses in his efforts risks eroding his unit's hard-earned gains. Sheikh Khalid's main objective is to keep up with advanced technology and equipment.

"We invite experts from all over the world. We attend joint trainings to continue to learn," he said. "All officers and noncommissioned officers who join our brigade must work 48 hours a day, not 24 hours. By that I mean we must do twice the work in the time allotted us."

Of special note to Sheikh Khalid is the unique relationship between Bahrain and the kingdom of Jordan. For example, Bahrain has reaped major benefits from attending Jordan's annual Eager Lion exercise. But the relationship runs much deeper than that. When His Majesty King Hamad wanted to establish the Bahrain Defense Force, he turned to His Majesty King Hussein bin Talal of Jordan to train his officers.

"We will never forget the honorable stand of Jordan and the late King Hussein bin Talal. His Majesty King Hamad requested Jordan's assistance in building the Bahrain Defense Force, and said his famous quote — 'We want to achieve what you have already achieved.' King Hussein responded: 'Consider it done!' He sent his best officers and noncommissioned officers to establish the Bahrain Defense Force at that time. As one can see, we have a professional force today. We still exchange experience and train with our brothers in Jordan," Sheikh Khalid said.

When it comes to protecting Bahrain, the Royal Guard Special Force places an emphasis on readiness to foil any hostile group wanting to breed insecurity. The brigade maintains a company-size element ready to deploy at a moment's notice.

One such recent mission was the Arab coalition's engagement in Yemen. Bahrain sent a contingent to support Yemen's government against rebels and terrorists.

"We made great efforts to prepare our fighters to conduct missions in environments different than ours, including fighting terrorist groups in open areas like Yemen," Sheikh Khalid said. "We trained to adapt to that environment and deal with that society to win their heart and minds. We faced many challenges at the beginning, but we successfully overcame them."

66 My role model is the king, he raised me to love the nation and adhere to a Soldier's principles from the days of my childhood. He seeded the love of the military inside us — me and my brother, Nasser — and he taught us that an honorable Soldier sacrifices for his homeland and flag. 99—Maj. Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa



'Police in a Box' Boosts Iraqi Security

UNIPATH STAFF

To maintain stability and prevent the resurgence of extremism after the military defeat of Daesh in Iraq, coalition forces have set up temporary local and border security stations in Mosul and across five liberated provinces. The \$50 million program is called "Police in a Box."

"Nothing says normal like a policeman," said Canadian Brig. Gen. D.J. Anderson. The plan will enable Iraqis to set up "temporary stations that provide a local police force with the equipment necessary to establish themselves in areas where [Daesh] destroyed their infrastructure," he said.

The stations, called "boxes," are large shipping containers packed with furniture, lighting, water tanks, laptops, phones, weapons storage spaces and two vehicles — everything police officers need

to "set up a visible presence and immediately begin serving their citizens," said Anderson, who leads the coalition's mission to train Iraqi forces.

"The contents can be unpacked and set up quickly to allow the police to immediately begin serving their citizens," Anderson said, adding that local police presence will help normalize areas that have been under Daesh's control for years.

Iraqi police training centers received the first 100 boxes in July 2017 — 50 for local police and 50 for border guards. Ultimately, the program calls for 100 boxes for local police forces and another 100 for the border with Syria, according to the Washington Examiner.

The border guard posts will have slightly different equipment, including a small tower.

The border posts will also need to be "more defensible" than police boxes, Anderson said.

To date, 15,000 police and 6,000 border guards — along with Iraqi Army, Counter Terrorism Service, tribal mobilization and Kurdish peshmerga forces — have received training from the coalition. Anderson said these training programs aim to transition to an intelligence-led, community-based form of policing.

An "effective and credible police and civil defense structure" will be critical in maintaining stability and building Iraqis' trust in their government, Anderson said. About 25,000 police will be required in Ninawa province alone "to do the job properly," he said.

An Iraqi policeman celebrates victory over Daesh in western Mosul in July 2017. REUTERS







UNIPATH STAFF

azakhstan hosted World Expo 2017 to showcase green technology the nation considers essential to its energy security. "Future energy" was the theme of the expo that brought together 115 countries, 22 international organizations and private companies from June to September 2017.

The opening ceremony of Expo 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan

With nearly 100 exhibition and cultural pavilions, the expo sought to stimulate global discussion and debate about green technology. Though Kazakhstan possesses abundant oil wealth, the country is committed to reducing reliance on fossil fuels, Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhamov wrote in The Diplomat, an online magazine.

"Renewable energy is at the heart of the solution to the challenge of promoting growth, creating jobs and increasing living standards while protecting our planet for future generations," Abdrakhamov wrote. "It is a challenge which we are determined to meet head-on in Kazakhstan."

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev aims for Kazakhstan to meet half its domestic power needs through renewable resources by 2050, Abdrakhamov wrote. "It is an ambitious target, but one which underlines our determination to build a world-class economy," Abdrakhamov said. "It recognizes the extraordinary potential we have as a country to harness renewable resources."

Addressing climate change with advanced technology could boost security by curbing rising temperatures and the hot summers, long droughts and severe flooding that can threaten human habitability, journalist Rene Zou wrote in the Geopolitical Monitor.

"Climate change is a nontraditional security challenge beyond the realm of military and economic power," Zou said. "The traditional focus on notions of hard security becomes increasingly irrelevant as human security, livelihood protection and sustainable development take center stage."

The site of the expo in Astana — the architecturally symbolic, spherical Nur Alem building — will remain in use as a research and innovation hub.

The previous World Expo was hosted by Milan, Italy, in 2015. The United Arab Emirates will host the 2020 expo in Dubai.

Egypt Conducts Raad 28 Military Exercise

UNIPATH STAFF

Focusing on a troubled zone near its western border, Egypt's military conducted a live-fire exercise called Raad 28 under the eyes of Maj. Gen. Sedqi Sobhi, commander in chief of the Armed Forces and minister of defense and military production.

Coming several weeks after Bright Star 17, which Egypt hosted with the U.S. military, Raad 28 reinforced the need for vigilance against the threat of terrorism emerging from places such as Libya.

Maj. Gen. Sobhi paid tribute to the commanders, officers and enlisted ranks of the Western Military Region for their outstanding performance and high combat readiness as demonstrated by military maneuvers in the field using tanks, artillery, fighter jets and helicopters.

He also expressed pride in the tribes in the region of Matrouh and his appreciation for their support of the armed forces in securing the Libyan border.

Maj. Gen. Sobhi stressed the need to disseminate training experiences across all levels of the military, keeping abreast of the latest armaments and technology available worldwide.

Also attending Raad 28 was Gen. Mahmoud Hegazy, then chief of staff of the Armed Forces; leaders of the respective branches of the military; the governor of Matrouh; local elders; and a sampling of students of military and civilian colleges. Source: Egypt Today



QATAR AMENDS ANTI-TERROR LAWS

UNIPATH STAFF

A July 2017 decree by Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani amends provisions of the country's terrorism law. Among other changes, the document outlines a process to create two national lists of individuals and groups involved in terrorist activity, according to the state-run Qatar News Agency.

Effective immediately upon publication in a government newspaper, the amendment contains more specific definitions of the terms "terrorist," "crime," "terrorist acts," "terrorist entities," "the freezing of funds" and the "financing of terrorism," Al-Jazeera reported.

Those accused of participating in terrorist activities will have the right to challenge these charges in court.

Qatar issued the decree, which replaced a 2004 anti-terrorism law, two weeks after signing an agreement with the United States to curb the financing of terrorist organizations. At the time, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson praised Qatar for its effort to "track down and disable terror financing," according to Asharq al-Awsat.



Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, right, meets with then-U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in July 2017. REUTERS

Kuwait Aids Refugees in Jordan

UNIPATH STAFF

Thanks to \$700,000 in Kuwaiti contributions, 174 Syrian students graduated in July 2017 from Jordan's Queen Rania Center at Yarmouk University. They are now qualified in vocational training, considered "essential" for preparing Syrians to enter the workforce, said Dr. Rifaat Faouri, president of the university.

Kuwait has played a leading role in providing humanitarian support to its Syrian "brothers" living as refugees in Jordan, said Dr. Hamad al-Duaij, Kuwait's ambassador to Jordan.

Kuwait aims to "alleviate the suffer-



A nurse prepares a vaccine for a Syrian child at al-Zaatari refugee camp. $_{\mbox{\scriptsize REUTERS}}$

ing of the Syrian people and assist the Jordanian government to withstand the repercussions of hosting refugees," al-Duaij said.

Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Jordan has absorbed at least 659,000 refugees, according to disputed United Nations figures. But with substantial security concerns following Daesh attacks on the informal Rukban refugee camp—as well as the economic burden Jordan faces trying to accommodate waves of refugees—some Syrians have found themselves with limited access to food and medical aid.

Kuwait has contributed to numerous Jordanian charities active in humanitarian and relief work, according to the Kuwait News Agency. These include Jordan's Takaful Association, the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization and the Jordanian branch of Kuwait's Society for Social Reform.

The money donated to the Takaful Association will go to a medical center the association runs for 6,000 refugees in Jordan, Director Khalid Nawasara said.









Pakistan Launches Anti-Daesh Operation

UNIPATH STAFF

Pakistan in July 2017 launched the Khyber 4 operation to take down Daesh in the mountainous Rajgal Valley along the country's northwestern border with Afghanistan. With air support, the operation aimed to curb the spread of Daesh influence in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), said Pakistani military spokesman Maj. Gen. Asif Ghafoor.

The operation, part of the broader Radd-ul-Fasaad counterterrorism campaign, aims first to secure the border near Rajgal Valley and then clear the rest of the area, Ghafoor said. Multiple terrorist organizations have safe havens in the area, according to the BBC, making it "the most critical area" in FATA, he said.

The regional Daesh branch, called Khorasan, consists mainly of former members of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, as well as splinter groups such as

Jamaat-ul-Ahrar and Tehreek-i-Taliban, according to Dawn.

"There is no organized infrastructure, and we shall not allow them to establish themselves," Ghafoor said. "We have to stop the influence spreading into Pakistani territory."

Pakistan has informed Afghan authorities of its operations, urging them to take similar measures on their side of the border, according to The Associated Press. Ghafoor said he was hopeful of increased information sharing and cooperation with Afghan leadership.

Since the launch of Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad, Pakistan's Army has launched more than 9,000 intelligencebased operations and established more than 1,700 checkpoints in coordination with police.

Pakistani Soldiers patrol near the Afghan border. REUTERS

Daesh Recruits Using Lebanese Soccer Team

UNIPATH STAFF

Lebanon's security forces arrested four members of a Beirut Daesh cell fronting as a soccer team, The Daily Star reported in July 2017.

The suspects, Syrian nationals, are accused of luring recruits under the guise of starting a new soccer team, but the team's training sessions were peppered with indoctrination in Daesh's violent ideology, Al-Arabiya reported.

To overcome difficulties in moving between Syria and Lebanon, members of the terror cell aimed to form Daesh sleeper cells throughout Lebanon. The cell had eventual plans to carry out terrorist operations in the country.

All detainees confessed links to Daesh and are under continued investigation, according to Lebanese forces.

Social worker Nancy Yamout, one of the founders of a Beirut-based nongovernmental organization focused on crime prevention, told The Daily Star that Daesh recruiters, or "fishers," have been widespread in Lebanon.

"They can recruit anywhere, which makes it harder to stop them," Yamout said. "They often target those who are unemployed and hanging out in cafes, for example, and invite them to pray."

Yamout's organization, called Rescue Me, is one of a handful of groups with access to the country's prisons. Yamout and her sister, Maya, a co-founder of the group, interview people who have been arrested for attempting to join extremist groups in Lebanon

Daesh has struck Lebanon in the past: Terrorists killed troops and took nine Soldiers hostage in 2014, then launched a bloody assault on a security post in 2015.





Omani Praises Counterterrorism Course

UNIPATH STAFF

earning more about the English language brought a group of counterterrorism professionals closer together — and enhanced their understanding of their mission, said Royal Air Force of Oman 1st Lt. Mohammed Murad Kamal Han Murad al-Balushi. He graduated in July 2017 from the English Language Enhancement Course (ELEC) hosted by the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies.

"Yes, I improved my English language skills, but I also learned something I did not imagine: how to work as part of a solid network of counterterrorism professionals with varied backgrounds and experiences from different countries," al-Balushi told his fellow graduates during a ceremony at the Marshall Center in Germany.

"My world is now smaller, closer and easier to make contacts and get assistance," he said. "I feel that in these five weeks, I have become a more effective counterterrorism professional."

Al-Balushi graduated with six other counterterrorism professionals from six nations, most of whom joined 76 other experts at the center's Program on Terrorism and Security Studies (PTSS).

PTSS course director Jim Howcroft emphasized at the

graduation ceremony that English has increasingly become the language of choice when interacting with the worldwide counterterrorism network.

"This course is an absolutely unique language program, because it combines language-skills development with the authentic counterterrorism content," said Marshall Center instructor Peggy Garza.

The Marshall Center's Partner Language Training Center Europe developed this five-week resident program to increase participants' confidence and ability to communicate professionally in English. The learning atmosphere centers on discussions among the participants and counterterrorism presentations by Howcroft and his team.

The course should not be confused with a language class because all the students already speak English, said ELEC instructor Thomas Soule.

"They are learning the necessary vocabulary and terminology together, adding their own diverse background and [counterterrorism] experiences into the mix," he said. "They begin to understand, analyze and think critically in English. Not quite as well, obviously, as in their native tongue, but much better than I think they ever thought they would."

Source: Marshall Center

Uzbekistan Boosts Information Security

UNIPATH STAFF

Uzbek President Shavkat
Mirziyoyev laid the groundwork
for the creation of the Mirzo
Ulugbek Innovation Center,
which will support the development of information technology
in the country, according to The
Tashkent Times. He signed the
July 2017 decree, "On Measures to
Fundamentally Improve Conditions
for Development of Information
Technologies in Uzbekistan,"
which aims to "radically improve"
conditions for the creation

and development of high-tech industries.

Thanks to the decree, experts will begin to implement projects focused on information security.

The decree will also lead to "further deepening the integration of science, education and the production process by providing additional benefits for software developers."

The center is the first of its kind in Uzbekistan. With its headquarters in Tashkent, the center will allow digital entrepreneurs throughout Uzbekistan to access a range of services remotely. In addition, the center provides a hub for those pursuing startups, software development, information technology and design.

In addition to other benefits, the center's residents will be exempt from taxes until 2028, according to The Calvert Journal. Uzbekistan hopes the measures outlined in the decree will boost information technology to 4 percent of the country's gross domestic product by 2021.





Afghanistan, Pakistan **Coordinate Counterterror Campaigns**

UNIPATH STAFF

o limit freedom of movement for Taliban fighters, Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed to more closely coordinate counterterrorism efforts. In July 2017 discussions, the two nations agreed to partner more closely than they have in years, according to The Wall Street Journal.

The countries aim to harmonize operations in their respective territories and limit terrorists' movement across their mutual 2,400-kilometer border. Ideally, the countries will establish forts, border posts and border coordination centers that include officers from both countries. In mid-2017, Pakistan said it would soon begin building a fence along the border, focusing first on the Bajur, Mohmand and Kyber tribal regions — those most prone to infiltration by violent extremists.

"Under Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad, we will strengthen our border," Pakistani military spokesman Maj. Gen. Asif Ghafoor told Dawn. "We will be able to check cross-border movement of terrorists."

In addition to border fencing, Pakistan and Afghanistan will maintain an open-door policy for cooperation and discussion to remove what Ghafoor called a "trust deficit" on the Afghan side, according to Dawn.

At least 43 border posts had



Pakistani Soldiers check the identity of citizens returning from Afghanistan in March 2017. REUTERS

been built by summer 2017, with 63 others under construction, the official said. Pakistan plans to build hundreds of border posts and forts along the border.

Pakistan in 2016 began building a barrier crossing in the northwestern town of Torkham. In a statement, the Pakistan Army said a secure border was "in the common interest of both countries."

"U.S. achievements in Afghanistan have a lot to do with support from and through Pakistan," Ghafoor told The Wall Street Journal. "Pakistan is part of the solution."

Dawa Khan Minapal, a spokesman for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, added that there will be coordinated operations on both sides of the border.

The border has always been politically complicated: Thousands of cargo trucks traverse its two major crossings each week, according to The Washington Post, and ethnic Pashtun communities live on both sides. Afghan officials have argued that new measures will disrupt cross-border traffic, but Pakistan argues that the fence is the only way to control a border that has been "permeable for far too long."



Navies Display Skills in Falcon Warrior Exercise

UNIPATH STAFF

n a variety of coordinated ship maneuvers and boarding exercises, Combined Task Force (CTF) 152 showed off its capabilities in the August 2017 Falcon Warrior Exercise. Participants demonstrated "impres-

A Soldier boards a ship during training at Falcon Warrior in the Arabian Gulf.

sive maritime flexibility and close multinational operating skills," according to Combined Maritime Forces.

The two-week exercise included personnel from 11 countries, as well as ships and aircraft from New Zealand and the United States.

"Exercise Falcon Warrior has been an excellent demonstration of nations working together to ensure security within the Arabian Gulf," said then-CTF 152 Commander Col. Abdelkader Almarahleh of the Royal Jordanian Navy. "I am immensely proud to command CTF 152. This is a special organization with a very important role."

Comprising ships from Gulf Cooperation Council nations, the Bahrain-based CTF 152 has worked to develop its capabilities and professionalism in recent years.

The responsibility for ensuring maritime security in the Arabian Gulf "does not lie with a single nation," Col. Abdelkader said. "It requires a collaborative effort."

Source: Combined Maritime Forces

TAJIKISTAN

Strengthens Natural Disaster Response









UNIPATH STAFF

A World Bank project approved in July 2017 will boost Tajikistan's ability to "prepare for, mitigate and respond to natural disasters," according to a World Bank news release. Prone to floods, mudslides and earthquakes, Tajikistan will use \$50 million to strengthen critical infrastructure.

The project will help officials shift from a reactive to a proactive response to natural disasters by "reducing disaster risks and strengthening climate resilience," said Jan-Peter Olters, World Bank country manager for Tajikistan.

"It reinforces Tajikistan's ongoing efforts to develop sound policies, responsive institutions and a resilient infrastructure to minimize the risk that natural hazards — if and when they strike — lead to debilitating disasters, irresoluble socio-economic costs, and avoidable human suffering," he said.

In particular, the Strengthening Critical Infrastructure Against Natural Hazards Project will help modernize crisis management centers, allowing Tajikistan's Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defence to generate timely early warnings, crisis communication and emergency preparedness and response.

At the same time, the project will help improve the Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering's assessment capacity. Finally, the Tajik government will create a \$6 million fund for immediate use in disaster response and recovery.

Like other Central Asian countries, Tajikistan's terrain leaves it vulnerable to natural disasters. Landslides, earthquakes and avalanches are common. In June 2017, severe mudslides in Sughd province damaged critical infrastructure and killed livestock, leading to an immediate need for food aid from the United Nations and the World Food Programme (WFP). In 2016, the WFP provided almost \$80,000 worth of food to disaster victims in Tajikistan, according to ReliefWeb.

At the same time, many of the country's roads, bridges and irrigation channels have deteriorated since they were built in the Soviet era. In response, key roads, bridges and river embankments in the Khatlon and Badakhshan regions — many of which were damaged in 2015 in natural disasters — will be rebuilt during the six-year project.



KYRGYZSTAN LAUNCHES VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

yrgyzstan launched a new program dedicated to social cohesion and violence prevention among youths and young children. The program was announced in July 2017 with the assistance of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development and UNICEF.

The four-year, \$2.5 million program will focus on the border areas of Batken and Jalal-abad, as well as in Issyk-Ata and Karakol. It will promote social cohesion and respect for children's rights while helping to reduce inequity and prevent future conflict. The announcement was made by Kyrgyzstan's Deputy Prime Minister Jenish Razzakov, British Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Robin Ord-Smith, and UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia Afshan Khan.

"Adolescents are essential to achieving peace and prosperity," Khan said. "This new program will help create safer communities and increase understanding across borders by protecting the rights of young people and ensuring their opinions are included in decisions that affect their lives. This will not only benefit young people themselves, but society as a whole and future generations."

The program will standardize civic education so adolescents learn the tools to think and respond to social issues. Young people will then be given opportunities to contribute to community planning and decision-making to support local administrators' develop-

throw colored powder as they take part in the Festival of Colors.

Young people

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ment of youth- and child-friendly municipalities and districts.

"The program, which includes multilingual education, improving access to child justice and building the capacity of local government, will play a crucial role in building social cohesion and preventing violence," Ambassador Ord-Smith said. "Together, we will help Kyrgyzstan's youth develop a more tolerant and resilient outlook and gain the skills to succeed in life."

Multilingual education will be extended to preschools and schools. The program will prioritize the most vulnerable girls and boys with essential services such as psychological support, legal assistance and specialized care for those who have experienced violence and abuse.





SAUDIS OVERHAUL SECURITY APPARATUS

UNIPATH STAFF

His Majesty King Salman of Saudi Arabia in July 2017 ordered the consolidation of the country's counterterrorism and domestic intelligence services.

The new unit, called the Presidency of State Security, will allow Saudi Arabia "to face all security challenges with a high degree of flexibility, readiness and the ability to move quickly to face any emergency," the state news agency reported.

A Saudi official told Reuters the new agency would be similar to the United States Department of Homeland Security. By making the king directly responsible for counterterrorism efforts, the new system will avoid the red tape and bureaucracy of its predecessor, he said.

"The purpose is that you want to create new efficiencies for both entities and elevate the work, especially in counterterrorism," he told Reuters.

The new security agency will be headed by intelligence chief Gen.

Abdulaziz bin Mohammed al-Howairini, who will report directly to King Salman, the BBC reported. The king also replaced the head of his royal guard with Gen. Suhail al-Mutiri and elevated the head of Mohammed bin Salman's personal office to the rank of minister.





UAE Youth Lead Region in Cyber Security Awareness

UNIPATH STAFF

Emirati youth are particularly attuned to the importance of tackling cyber threats, according to a 2017 survey by Raytheon International. Of the 4,000 young people interviewed in the Middle East, Asia, Europe and the United States, 72 percent of the Emiratis had received career guidance in the cyber security field — double the global average of 34 percent.

Seventy-percent of young Emiratis reported reading or hearing a news account related to cyber attacks, compared to a global average of 48 percent. These numbers "demonstrate the emphasis laid by the government, by academia and industry" on building awareness of these issues, said Shahzad Zafar, cyber security director at Raytheon's branch in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

After identifying a global "cyber talent gap" in 2015 of 1 million cyber security-related jobs, Raytheon commissioned surveys in 2015 and 2017 to gauge young people's beliefs about cyber security and develop cyber security professionals.

Survey results highlighted one of the key causes of the gap: a lack of training. Though 73 percent of participants said they were aware of the importance of the field, 48 percent felt they needed additional training to enter the workforce. And Emiratis appeared uniquely qualified to identify a training gap: 84 percent of those surveyed in the UAE were "aware of the typical job responsibilities of the cyber security professionals," compared to just 45 percent worldwide, Zafar said.

"More needs to be done internationally to provide youth with the training they need to enable them to take up a cyber security-related job in the public or private sector," Zafar told *Nation Shield* magazine.







Medical Aid Donations Save Yemenis

UNIPATH STAFF

Medical aid from several countries is credited with improving the health of Yemenis suffering from diseases such as cholera.

As part of a Turkish aid campaign, Yemen received a medical shipment worth \$4.4 million in July 2017. The ship carried 47 tons of medicine and 70 tons of medical equipment, in addition to two fully equipped mobile hospitals.

Saudi Arabia's King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Aid delivered 76 tons of medical supplies to Yemen by overland convoy in the summer of 2017.

The United Arab Emirates Red Crescent, in cooperation with the United Nations, recently spent \$10 million to battle a Yemeni cholera outbreak.

The Turkish donation included

devices to measure water pollution, chemicals to disinfect water and food, and saline, antibiotics, disinfectants, vitamins and surgical gloves, according to *The Daily Sabah*. The Anadolu Agency reported that the shipment also included 10,000 tons of flour and 5,000 tons of pasta, baby biscuits, cholera medicine and wheelchairs.

Turkey's aid to Yemen — part of a larger campaign to help nearby East African countries cope with acute drought — aims to forestall "a major humanitarian crisis," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wrote in a July 2017 tweet.

Limited clean water and food in Yemen sparked a cholera epidemic that killed more than 1,500 people — nearly 400 of whom were children. From May to June 2017, doctors diagnosed more than 200,000 cases of the disease, reporting about 5,000 new cases each day.

By November 2017, the World Health Organization noted a decline in new cases of the disease, a tribute to the medical aid that had flooded the country.

Immersed in civil war since 2014, when Houthi rebels overran much of the country, Yemen is home to 21 million people in need of humanitarian aid and 2 million children suffering from malnutrition. A shortage of medical supplies has exacerbated the situation.

A boy is treated for cholera in Sanaa, Yemen. The nation received \$4.4 million in medical aid in July 2017 to alleviate the effects of a cholera outbreak. REUTERS



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