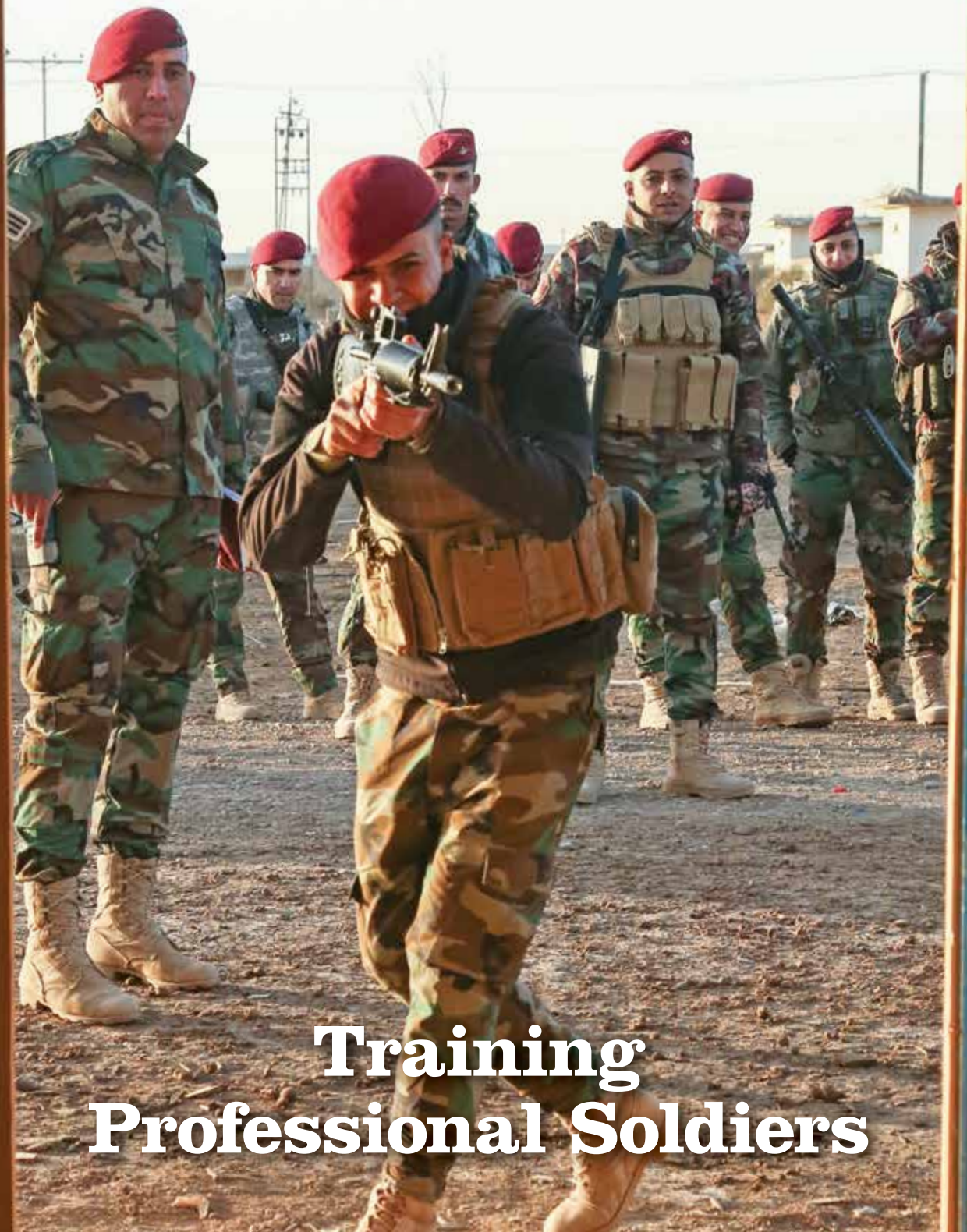


**Defeating Terrorism
Through Ideology**

**Lebanese Army
Defines its Role**

**Female Troops
Secure Afghanistan**

UNIPATH



**Training
Professional Soldiers**



Members of the AMADEE-18 Mars simulation mission conduct experiments in Oman's Dhofar desert in February 2018 as part of a collaboration between the Austrian Space Forum and the Oman National Steering Committee.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Yemeni artists in Sanaa participate in a campaign to support peace called "Open Day of Art" in March 2018.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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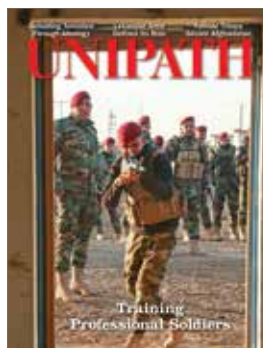
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A member of Iraqi Security Forces clears a doorway during urban operations training at Camp Taji, Iraq, in January 2018, as part of a Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve.

SPC. ANTONIO LEWIS/U.S. ARMY

UNIPATH

Building Capacity

Volume 8, Number 3



CENTCOM COMMANDER

GENERAL
JOSEPH L. VOTEL
U.S. Army



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KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE

I would like to thank our friends at U.S. Central Command for their kind invitation to be the leader who introduces this issue of *Unipath* magazine, which discusses building professional forces.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate the men of the Iraqi Armed Forces and the great Iraqi people for their victory over the gangs of terrorists who invaded the land and spilled the blood of innocents who God commanded to protect.

Words cannot express the extent of the devastation caused by these murderers who came from all parts of Earth. They destroyed churches, mosques, schools and monuments. They inaugurated a frenzied campaign of indiscriminate killing and carnage.

We all lived the tragedy of the fall of Mosul, and the question that arose in the corridors of the security services was how military units broke before a bunch of gangsters so quickly?

Iraq's military leaders agreed that gangs do not have the technology, the military equipment or the field experience to sweep a city the size of Mosul so quickly. The defect lay in the quality and professionalism of the forces that held the city at the time.

The reason for this was the hasty and sometimes careless construction of the Iraqi Army after 2003. It was assembled incorrectly based on sectarianism and regionalism, and when al-Qaida in Iraq began to emerge, mistrust and disgust by citizens of the provinces created a large gap between citizens and the Army. Even in the provinces of the south before 2014, where there was no fighting, citizens were alienated from the Army.

But after the tragedy of Mosul, leadership changed in the Ministry of Defense, and we began to build the Army on a professional basis. We created a center to develop units of the Army and developed plans through which we could improve the performance of troops.

At the beginning of 2015, the training campaign started on two main tracks. The first was institutional training, which is the construction of institutions in which the Soldiers are initially trained using 100 percent Iraqi resources. The second aspect is specialization, such as the Armored Corps, Engineering and the Air Defense School. In these fields we have developed Iraqi trainers and enlisted expertise from the international coalition forces.

We also cooperated with the coalition forces in developing a brigade-size formation, beginning with individual training and then group training so that we built professional military units with high capabilities ready to fight liberation battles. We set priorities for the liberation of cities and gained the confidence of citizens. Now, when a citizen is asked, he'll say he prefers to deal with the Army, and this change came after Iraqis noticed the Army had become a professional, nonsectarian institution.

During the liberation battles, 50 percent of the military forces fought, and the other 50 percent helped the displaced and took care of children. We used our field medical units to tend to

displaced citizens and allocated a large part of our equipment to evacuate civilians from conflict zones to safe areas, including refugee camps.

We have won the confidence of citizens and built bridges of trust between us, and the Army is recovering its prestige. Today we have a strong, capable and efficient Army to take responsibility and defend the homeland. With this new strategy and focused training, we have been able to achieve great successes.

Leaders must continue to focus on building professional Soldiers loyal to the homeland first, without adherence to political parties or independent armed groups. The Soldier must be educated to abide by military laws and

principles and respect civilians. Military life isn't just about wearing uniforms and carrying arms

— it's about adhering to principles of honor and respecting the rule of law. We succeeded in defeating the terrorists and gaining the confidence of the citizens after we focused on the qualitative selection of Soldiers outside sectarian and partisan influence.

We trained about 10 brigades in 2017, and in 2018 we intend to train 15 more, in addition to building our training institutions that provide individual and specialized training. Here, I must pay tribute to the role of our friends in the international coalition forces who worked with us in the spirit of teamwork. At each stage they have played specific roles. For example,

during the fierce fighting in liberating cities, our friends in the coalition provided air support. They also played a major role in intelligence and logistical support. They were ready to carry out our requests to strike targets or provide intelligence. Also, in cases of precision targeting or bad weather, we would ask for the assistance of their superior technology. But our military capabilities are growing with the support of friends and, God willing, the Iraqi Army will become an Army with high capabilities and resources.

At this important stage, we are rebuilding security forces. The coalition will play a major role in the rehabilitation and processing of Iraqi training institutions. They also have a great role in providing the existing and specialized training teams. This is not limited to the Ministry of Defense, but includes training and equipping other security forces such as the federal and local police, emergency forces, anti-terrorist forces and border forces.

I look forward to seeing a self-sufficient Iraqi Army. We have focused on building the administrative system and completed the infrastructure. Now I hope that our Army, with its expertise and skill, will become a model for all the armies of the region in urban warfare, the fight against terrorism and the evacuation of displaced people.

We strive to share our experiences with our friends. The Iraqi Army has become a shining example in this field.



Gen. Othman Al-Ghanimi
Chief of Staff, Iraqi Armed Forces

Pakistan's SUCCESS

*United Nations
peacekeeping troops
from Pakistan have
helped bring peace and
security to Darfur*

-in- Sudan

MAJ. UMAR ISMAIL SAJID GAREWAL, LT. COL. SHAUKAT NAEEM KHAN
AND LT. COL. MUHAMMAD FARID, PAKISTAN ARMY
PHOTOS BY THE UNITED NATIONS

Pakistan's experience with United Nations peacekeeping began in July 1960, when the first Pakistani contingent was deployed in the Congo. Since then, Pakistan has contributed more than 160,000 troops in 41 U.N. missions in 23 countries. Of those, 144 peacekeepers, including 23 officers, have sacrificed their lives while performing their duties as of late 2017. At present, Pakistan is the fourth largest Troops Contributing Country (TCC), with 7,653 of all ranks deployed on seven U.N. missions. One of those is the African Union-U.N. Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

A displaced mother feeds her child in a safe zone provided by the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur.







Civilians in Kutum, Darfur, receive medical supplies. The Pakistani military contingent played a role in providing the aid.

What our nation's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, noted decades ago still rings true: "Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in its material and moral support to the oppressed and depressed people of the world and in upholding the principles of U.N. Charter."

The Darfur mission

Darfur is a region of 493,180 square kilometers in western Sudan that was an independent sultanate for several hundred years until it was incorporated into Sudan by Anglo-Egyptian forces in 1916. Islam is the main religion, and the populace is divided into two communities, Arabs and Africans, who are further divided into many tribes scattered over Darfur. Africans are primarily farmers, and Arabs are nomadic herds-men. The basic dispute between African and Arab communities revolves around power and resource sharing.

The recent conflict in Darfur began in February 2003, when two armed groups — Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) — took up arms against the government for allegedly neglecting the region and oppressing black Africans in favor of Arabs. The government responded with a campaign against the rebels that was later termed ethnic cleansing of Darfur's non-Arabs. The conflict resulted in massive killings of unarmed civilians and ousted 2.5 million people from their homes, making them internally displaced people (IDP). Darfur is divided into five federal states that also correspond to the operational zones/commands of UNAMID: Central Darfur, North Darfur, South Darfur, East Darfur and West Darfur.

Pakistani Battalion-5 (PakBatt-5) pursued the U.N. mandate with full devotion and achieved significant results in the Kutum subsector through untiring efforts lasting 10 months. Pakistani troops stabilized the situation through a combination of efforts that included aggressive patrolling, engaging communities' leadership and introducing inter-community dialogue. PakBatt-5 has done all it can to assist the locals IDPs. Therefore, the Pakistani contingent enjoys a good reputation among the populace. PakBatt-5 has regularly conducted civil-military-cooperation (CIMIC) activities and welfare projects: hosting intercommunity workshops, providing water to villages and schools, establishing medical camps and distributing free medicine. It also visits schools to distribute supplies, conducts frequent lectures about health and hygiene, organizes sports tournaments, renovates schools and hospitals and celebrates cultural and religious festivals for local citizens and IDPs.

Success and security

The Kutum subsector was considered the most hostile region in Darfur because of rebel activities. No high-level official delegation from UNAMID or the government of Sudan had visited the region for years. After the Pakistani contingent arrived and restored peace, a number of high-level officials/delegations from UNAMID, Sudan and international nongovernmental organizations visited Kutum. They



A wounded Pakistani police officer recovers at a Pakistani-run hospital in Nyala, Sudan. He was serving as part of the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur.

include the ambassadors from Germany and Switzerland, the first vice president of Sudan and the heads of the World Food Programme and World Health Organisation. All acknowledged and appreciated the efforts and contributions of PakBatt-5 to bring peace back to a region that remains a potential flashpoint for UNAMID.

Now that peace is prevailing in the region and PakBatt-5 has provided the populace a platform for protection of human rights, economic improvement, promotion of social and moral values and, most important, improved local humanitarian conditions. The progress made by PakBatt-5 in these challenging conditions is a source of pride for Pakistan.

Pakistan Engineers Company

Pakistan Engineers Company was deployed in this mission in December 2007 and completed its ninth rotation in March 2017. It's a multirole outfit, entailing all engineer trades. Its mandate is to provide engineering support in the areas of mobility, survivability and general engineering to support the overall military mission.

The Pakistani engineers repaired Airport Ring Road, a 10-kilometer-long all-weather track constructed for patrolling vehicles and security personnel along the perimeter of the local airport. Before the repairs, the road's loose, boggy sand hindered security.

The road was completed successfully over three months, a cumbersome task involving hauling water and quarried material over long distances.

Another project called the Ardamata Valley Flood Protection Works was one of the most significant achievements of Pakistani military engineers. It turned out to be a significant confidence-building measure between UNAMID and the government of Sudan. Construction of a 1-kilometer gabion wall and excavation of a 1.2-kilometer diversion channel — completed in one month — protect the road connecting El Geneina Airport and an IDP camp from flash floods in the rainy season.

Mine awareness

U.N. international day for mine awareness and support was organized on April 3, 2017, by the engineers in collaboration with the authorities at the El Geneina camp. It was held in memory of mine victims of Darfur in general and El Geneina in particular. It was aimed at educating the people of UNAMID and El Geneina regarding hazards and precautions against unexploded ordinance, mines and improvised explosive devices. The day was celebrated with a friendly football match between teams from UNAMID and El Geneina. The overall impact of the event was remarkable and appreciated by all.

“Our foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in its material and moral support to the oppressed and depressed people of the world and in upholding the principles of U.N. Charter.”

— Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan

Pakistani engineers even arranged for Darfur Christians at the El Geneina camp to celebrate Easter in April 2017 with special church services, music, candle-light, flowers and the ringing of church bells.

A CIMIC success

Sortoni IDP camp in North Darfur holds more than 20,000 people, who had only one mosque housed in a temporary structure with a corrugated iron sheet roof and stony floor. IDPs had long requested renovation of this mosque, and the Pakistan Engineers Company completed the work in two weeks.

The company ensured the use of good engineering practices — no compromise on quality was accepted. Proper curing was carried out for the cement work. The roof got additional anchorage to protect it from Sudanese sandstorms known as *haboobs*. With a contribution from contingent headquarters, additional works have been carried out, including construction of a cement floor for the mosque’s main hall and construction of two cupboards. Gifts of Holy Qurans were provided for the mosque.

The Pakistani contingent’s work for the grief-stricken populace of the Sortoni IDP camp has provided a source of internal peace to the community, a success of “winning hearts and minds.”

A vital hospital

Since the beginning of UNAMID in 2008, the Pakistan Army Medical Corps has shouldered the responsibility of establishing and maintaining the mission’s only Level III Hospital, located at Nyala, Darfur. The Pakistani hospital represents the highest level of military medical facility available to the troops serving in Darfur as well as to the national and international civilian staff. The U.N. Pakistan Field Hospital-I pioneered this skilled, advanced and highly professional health care setup. Pakistan Field Hospital-9 has performed its assigned responsibilities since March 2017.

Pakistan Level III Hospital is recognized for extending quality medical services for its clientele and is acknowledged as “The UNAMID Healers” across the mission area of responsibility. The hospital has always been appreciated at all levels for exhibiting skilled professionalism and accomplishment of the assigned mandate. Pakistan Military Field Hospital has set standards of excellence to be followed and acquired by medical setups of various countries performing duties in UNAMID.

The hospital is equipped with the latest primary care, multidisciplinary specialized care, advanced surgical services, dental services, mental health services, an intensive care unit and a skilled Aero-Medical Evacuation Team.

Aside from looking after the national and international civilian and military personnel of the U.N., the hospital provides medical care to a large number of Sudanese on humanitarian grounds. The hospital has treated many accident cases, complicated medical cases and other serious emergencies of the local civilian population completely free of charge.

The hospital has treated more than 82,000 patients, and more than 11,000 surgeries have been performed since August 2008. The number of patients given dental treatment, indoor treatment and rehabilitation is significant. Similarly, a radiology and pathology department has provided diagnostic facilities for patients. A total of 34,805 IDPs have been treated at the hospital.

Over the years, Pakistan Level III Hospital has earned respect and honor for the country and Army in civilian and military circles of the U.N. and Sudan. The professional excellence of the Pakistan Army Medical Corps has been acknowledged throughout the mission and U.N. headquarters.

The impressions imprinted by this hospital on the hearts and minds of the patients and visitors will surely last a long time and act as a reminder of the success of the overall Pakistani peacekeeping mission to Darfur. ♦

A version of this story appeared in *Hilal* magazine.

THE IDEOLOGICAL FIGHT **AFTER MOSUL**

**Informational Warfare Helped
Defeat Daesh in Iraq and Could
Help Ensure the Peace** UNIPATH STAFF



Just weeks after Iraq eradicated Daesh's last stronghold in the country, Baghdad hosted the 3rd International Conference on Countering Daesh Propaganda and Ideology. The mood among the multinational audience was congratulatory and optimistic in recognition of a victory that had reduced Daesh's presence to a few locations in Syria.

"Iraq achieved the complete victory by liberating its total land from the disgrace of Daesh using organic forces with support of advisors and experts from the coalition forces," Safaa al-Din al-Sheikh, Iraq's deputy national security advisor, said in an introduction to the December 13-14, 2017, conference. "Yet Iraq faces a huge challenge in combating the ideas of Daesh, which will determine the real victory over the terrorists."

Baghdad was honored with the presence of some of Saudi Arabia's top counterterrorism leaders. Dr. Nasser al-Baqmi, secretary-general of Saudi Arabia's Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology, or ETIDAL, described the main tenets of counterterrorist messaging as "exposure, raising awareness, confrontation and cooperation."

"Iraq is fighting terrorists on behalf of the world," Dr. Nasser said. "We praise the important role of Iraq in fighting extremist ideology."

Dr. Nasser highlighted his country's critical role fighting terrorism, since the country is the heartland of Islam. The center relies on security methodology and statistical intelligence to disrupt terrorist propaganda, refuting and correcting their distortions of religious texts.

"We have expert and specialized teams to analyze the extremist narratives in real time and discredit them by properly citing the Quran and hadiths," he said. "We are very proud of our achievement and our capability to defeat terror ideology on social media."

Staff Maj. Gen. Adel Abas, director of planning in Iraq's Combined Joint Operation Command, recounted how Iraq and its allies, after the security collapse of 2014, achieved victory over Daesh in 2017 with a bitter fight for the strategic city of Mosul. He also praised the role of media in defeating the enemy.

"The media is an effective weapon that can defeat the enemy on all levels," the general said. "Media and psychological operations were used to great effect to support the fighting by using portable radios and dropping leaflets."

Maj. Gen. Tahseen Al-Khafaji, director of media and morale guidance in the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, discussed the value of asymmetric psychological warfare to rid cities of Daesh gangs with less collateral damage. The Iraqi military created a specialized psychological operations unit that helped build bridges of communication with citizens in Daesh-occupied areas.

"We received many intelligence tips about weapon caches and enemy posts from civilians. Despite what they went through during the furious fighting, our citizens

received us with open arms and tears of relief and told us that they were following our media instructions and kept some of our dropped leaflets," Gen. Tahseen said.

Saeed Naama al-Jayashi, chief of Iraq's national War Media Cell, explained how his organization monitored and analyzed enemy propaganda and created a plan to counter terrorists' psychological efforts. He expressed gratitude to the coalition for not only unifying its informational efforts with Iraq's but also providing advanced technology and training for Iraqi psychological operation units. "We learned a lot from our allies' experiences, and we were well-coordinated with the coalition forces in the operational and strategic areas," he said.

Several speakers at the conference stressed the need to continue an aggressive communications strategy to defeat the twisted ideology that motivates Daesh and other terrorists. Much of the focus should be on immunizing children from such toxic messages.

“The media is an effective weapon that can defeat the enemy on all levels. Media and psychological operations were used to great effect to support the fighting by using portable radios and dropping leaflets.”

— Staff Maj. Gen. Adel Abas

Esam Amin of the Directorate of Security and Intelligence in the Iraqi Ministry of Defense said Daesh's propaganda operations took a severe hit with the loss of Iraqi territory, yet its messaging machine continues to exploit social media to target isolated groups that sympathize with its ideology.

After the expulsion of Daesh from Mosul, the terror group's publications have focused on violent revenge. To prevent attempts at a resurgence, Amin urged governments to try to delete Daesh archives from the internet. Equally concerning is the psychological state of children who lived under Daesh occupation for several years. Dr. Saad Oubaidi, an expert in psychological operations, said Daesh made a footprint inside a community that found itself on the opposite side of the government.

"What concerns us today is not the return of Daesh, but the children who were brainwashed by Daesh," Dr. Oubaidi said. "Mosque preachers must change their speech and avoid talking about heavenly virgins."

Dr. Saad al-Hadithi, spokesman for the Iraqi prime minister's office, urged the government to employ sociologists and religious scholars to protect youth against extremist narratives transmitted by cellphone from social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

"The state alone can't face up to these challenges without the support of the people and civil organizations," Dr. al-Hadithi said. ♦

ASSAULT FROM THE AIR

THE AFGHAN AIR FORCE BOOSTS
FIREPOWER AND IMPROVES TRAINING
IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISTS

UNIPATH STAFF

Bolstered by the arrival of modern aircraft and the deployment of trained aviators, the Afghan Air Force is demonstrating greater mobility and firepower to convey Soldiers and supplies to and from battlefields across the country.

Afghan leaders, together with partners from the multinational coalition, lauded the advancements of the Afghan Air Force in breaking a military stalemate against the Taliban and other terrorists occupying the country.

“I am happily announcing that today a new page is opening in Afghanistan Air Force life,” Maj. Gen. Abdul Raziq Sherzai, the Kandahar Air Wing commander, said in late November 2017 at the graduation of new pilots.

Using helicopters and airplanes — including deliveries of UH-60 Black Hawks to replace the country’s aging fleet of Russian helicopters — the Air Force is flying thousands of sorties against the Taliban.





Afghan National Army commandos take positions after descending from a helicopter during a military exercise at Kabul Military Training Centre. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



A helicopter in the Afghan Special Mission Wing approaches a landing zone during training in Kandahar in January 2018. MAX BLUMENFELD/NATO SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMPONENT
COMMAND-AFGHANISTAN



An Afghan pilot prepares to fly an A-29 Super Tucano, a reliable, easy-to-fly airplane used against terrorists.
STAFF SGT. ALEXANDER W. RIEDEL/U.S. AIR FORCE

Accomplishments include not just moving troops and material to the battlefield, but also successfully extricating and evacuating wounded Soldiers and destroying Taliban drug processing labs used to finance terrorism.

Resolute Support Commander U.S. Army Gen. John Nicholson, the U.S. military's senior leader in Afghanistan, viewed the improvements in manpower and machinery as decisive in the struggle against violent extremism.

Air power is critically important because it allows Afghan troops to dominate the ground-based Taliban. Afghanistan is scheduled to acquire up to 150 Black Hawk helicopters through 2019.

"A tidal wave of Afghan air power is on the horizon," Gen. Nicholson said. "The momentum has shifted, and it is irreversible."

Six pilots completed training on the new Black Hawk helicopters in late 2017, enduring 16 weeks of training. These first pilots were experienced aviators who developed their talents flying Russian Mi-17s. Fourteen more pilots will travel to the United States for training in 2018 and another 21 in 2019.

The first Afghan Black Hawk crews took off on missions in May 2018, their activation timed to the arrival of new helicopters.

"Today I'm very excited that it is my graduation day," Afghan Air Force Capt. Jamshid Rezaye said in November 2017. "I cannot express my feeling right now, because I get to serve the Afghan people."

Once Afghan pilots graduate and become mission ready, all combat missions will be flown and led by Afghans. Coalition members are minimally involved in such combat missions.

"I congratulate my young and patriotic pilots for this success and completion of their course," Gen. Sherzai said.

"I'm expecting these young pilots to use these modern and new helicopters, fighting bravely and strongly against the enemy and against terrorists."

Capabilities have grown in other units as well. The Special Mission Wing, Afghanistan's special operations aviation element, graduated 15 trainees of its Green Platoon at the unit's headquarters in Kabul on Nov. 25, 2017. Instruction occurred on PC-12 multipurpose planes and Mi-17 helicopters. Instructor pilots, two PC-12 student pilots, four Mi-17 helicopter pilots and other crew members completed training needed to serve in the Special Mission Wing.

"The graduates are entrusted with upholding the highest standards of professionalism of those who came before them and those who will follow in their footsteps in years to come," said Lt. Gen. Mohammad Sharif Yaftali, Afghan Ministry of Defense chief of staff.

The Green Platoon course is a rigorous eight-week training program that focuses on field and classroom exercises, allowing fixed-wing and helicopter crews to interact in planning missions and devising tactics.

"The graduates are now part of an elite aviation unit," said Richard Riley, assistant chief of mission for the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. "Their achievements are nothing short of remarkable for they now have a much greater purpose of providing and maintaining security for all of Afghanistan."

Further training using C-130 aircraft has demonstrated the success of Afghans in resupply missions. In July 2017, Afghan Airmen and pilots and U.S. Air Force advisors made a round-trip C-130 flight from Hamid Karzai International Airport to Kandahar Airfield to drop off supplies and transport wounded Afghan National Defense and Security Force personnel to Kabul for further treatment.



An Afghan Air Force pilot receives a certificate during a graduation ceremony for Black Hawk helicopter pilots in November 2017. His commander, Maj. Gen. Abdul Raziq Sherzai, stands at center.

Afghan Air Force pilots wear pendants given by instructors signifying their completion of UH-60 Black Hawk training at Kandahar Airfield.

TECH. SGT. VERONICA PIERCE/U.S. AIR FORCE

“We fly several missions per week,” Lt. Col. James Torok, a C-130 advisor, said in late 2017. “At this point we’re pretty much in an assisting phase. Advising mainly comes into play when dealing with aircrew equipment and procurement. The Afghans are no longer coalition dependent on airlift missions.”

The entire C-130 airlift mission was planned, coordinated, controlled and executed by the Afghan Air Force. Afghan Air Force Maj. Khial M. Shinwari served as the aircraft commander of the mission.

“It was my dream to be an Air Force pilot,” the major said. “I come from a strong family lineage of military service; my

brother and father served in the Afghan National Army, but I am the first member of my family the join the Air Force.”

U.S. Army Gen. Nicholson praised the more than 15,000 sorties flown by Afghan Airmen and the increasing modernization of the Air Force.

“Afghanistan is not only fighting for its own future,” Gen. Nicholson said in November 2017. “You are fighting for humanity’s future. We are with you in this fight, and we will stay with you.” ♦

Sources: NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan, Resolute Support Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, *Washington Examiner*



ROLE OF THE
LEBANESE
ARMY

*Soldiers
defend borders,
provide
internal
security and
engage in
humanitarian
missions*

LEBANESE ARMED FORCES

Lebanon enjoys a distinct international status despite its limited area and its small population of about 6 million.

Some may wonder about the power behind that status, and the answer came from the great Pope John Paul II: "Lebanon is more than a country; it is a message."

This small country is rich in the values of its people and its humanitarian civilization. On its territory are 18 sects, among them Muslims, Christians and minorities, all living in harmony and peace. This historical example of coexistence can serve as a model for the success of diversity and unity.

In addition, Lebanon's geopolitical importance is illustrated by its location on the eastern rim of the Mediterranean Sea, serving as a bridge between the West and the Middle East. This is in addition to the superiority of Lebanon throughout history in the fields of science, thought and creativity.

However, these factors, which are a source of wealth for Lebanon, have been and still are subject to internal and external challenges.

What is almost unique to Lebanon among the countries of the world are regional difficulties that confront the nation. It has required extraordinary efforts, especially considering the continuing instability to the south since 1948 and the wave of terrorism in the Middle East that followed the so-called Arab Spring in late 2010.

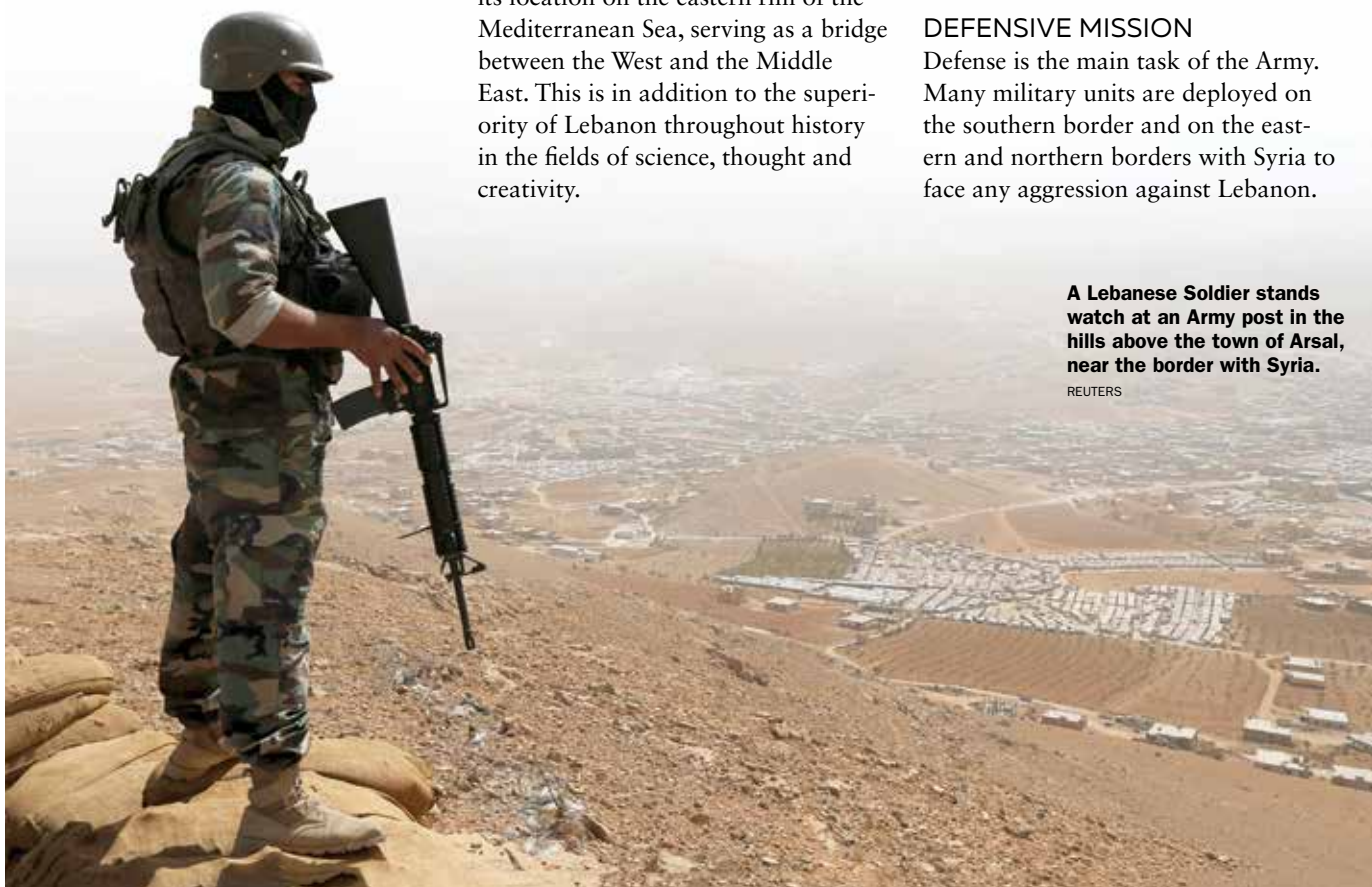
Based on the above, the Lebanese Army has acquired a distinctive national role in defending Lebanon, protecting the message of its people and preserving its gains. The role of the Lebanese Army is divided into three main categories: defense, security and development.

DEFENSIVE MISSION

Defense is the main task of the Army. Many military units are deployed on the southern border and on the eastern and northern borders with Syria to face any aggression against Lebanon.

A Lebanese Soldier stands watch at an Army post in the hills above the town of Aarsal, near the border with Syria.

REUTERS



The Lebanese Army reacted to the threat of global terrorism before other armies of the world and before terrorism became a global danger.

MAINTAINING INTERNAL SECURITY

In most countries of the world, internal security forces and local police are often assigned this task. But because of Lebanon's unique environment and the repercussions of the internal events that took place between 1985 and 1990 — including the activities of armed militias — the Council of Ministers in 1991 mandated that the Army and Lebanese security forces maintain internal security.

This decision led to the collection of militia weapons and the deployment of the Army in most of Lebanon.

This task includes the establishment of checkpoints and patrols, raids in search of wanted people, immediate intervention in cases of security breaches, and providing security for demonstrations and gatherings.

terrorism became a global danger.

In early 2000, the state fought a harsh battle against a terrorist group that was holed up around Jarud al-Dniyeh in northern Lebanon. They were equipped with heavy and medium weapons and planned to establish an extremist emirate in northern Lebanon. The Army successfully completed the battle and captured many individuals.

In 2007, the Army again fought a long battle, this time against Fatah al-Islam, the terrorist organization that was planning a takeover of the north for use as a base to spread terrorism over other parts of Lebanon. This battle ended with the elimination of a large number of terrorists.

With the launch of the Arab Spring in early 2011 and the flare-up of security events in Syria, many local groups appeared. The most serious was the group led by terrorist Ahmad al-Asir in the Saida region, which in 2013 attacked military posts in the area. The Army fought back and managed to eliminate the threat quickly.

Dangerous terrorist organizations participating in the Syrian events, the most prominent of which were ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusrah, used the northern and eastern borders of Lebanon with Syria and began dispatching booby traps, carrying out rocket attacks and launching rockets into the Lebanese interior.

These attacks included an incursion into the town of Arsal on the eastern

border and attacks on troops deployed in the region in 2014 with the aim of seizing the area extending from the eastern mountains to the sea at the northern city of Tripoli.

But the Army was on guard for such a move. It carried out a large-scale attack in which it managed to expel the terrorists from Arsal and its surroundings.

After that, the Army almost daily tightened its grip on the terrorists, peppering its positions with aircraft



Lebanese Soldiers hold positions in mountains near the eastern town of Ras Baalbek during an operation against terrorists.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The Army also provides security to conduct parliamentary and municipal elections; protects national, cultural and artistic activities; combats organized crime and cross-border smuggling; and guards camps of displaced people and refugees.

COUNTERTERRORISM

The Lebanese Army reacted to the threat of global terrorism before other armies of the world and before

**Lebanese Army Soldiers near
Ras Baalbek** REUTERS



and heavy artillery. It carried out pre-emptive operations of quality in their areas of deployment, which led to the destruction and encirclement of enemy forces.

On August 19, 2017, Lebanese Armed Forces Commander Gen. Joseph Aoun announced the launch of the “Dawn of the Outskirts” operation to liberate the eastern mountains from ISIS. Within a week, this organization was defeated and expelled completely from Lebanese territory.

The Lebanese Army was the first among armies of the region to achieve victory over an organized terrorist body occupying part of its territory.

There is no doubt that the success of this operation at record speed is due to the fighting qualities and high morale of the Lebanese Soldier, the involvement of different sects in the Army and their rejection of terrorism. In addition, qualitative assistance was provided by many friendly countries, led by the United States and the European Union (EU).

However, despite this great victory, the danger of terrorism remains in Lebanon, an assumption the Army acts on by monitoring terrorist cells and eliminating them in their infancy.

It should be noted here that the Army’s war against terrorism, particularly security measures in Lebanese territorial waters and banning their use

as a route for illegal immigration, has contributed to preventing the infiltration of terrorists from Lebanon into EU countries. The measure has thus limited terrorist operations targeting those countries.

In sum, the Army does not consider limiting the fight against terrorism to the security sector. The problem also must be dealt with intellectually. Terrorism is the clear opposite of a Lebanese society based on a culture of diversity, freedom and openness. Any security measures confronting terrorism must include a national and humanitarian focus and an information and cultural campaign aimed at spreading awareness among citizens about the dangers of terrorism and extremism, and its methods of distorting the principles and values of religious messages.

DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN MISSION

In addition to the tasks of defense and security, the Army carries out another mission related to the lives of Lebanese citizens. It includes, but is not limited to, rebuilding the country’s infrastructure, removing mines, protecting the environment, supporting state institutions with energy and expertise, and restoring archaeological sites.

The Army is also involved in tourism, reforestation, and assisting students and residents of remote

villages within the framework of the civil-military program.

Other efforts include search, rescue and evacuation operations in the event of natural disasters and other disasters. The Army participated in rescue operations for an air crash that occurred in 2003 in Cotonou, Benin, and for an Ethiopian passenger jet that crashed off the coast of Khaldéh, Lebanon, in 2010. Soldiers also recovered victims from the Panamanian cargo ship *Danny F II* after an accidental sinking off Tripoli in 2009.

The mission is to help citizens and contribute to national development, as well as to strengthen the bonds of trust between the Army and the people and to provide a model for state institutions that work for the public interest.

In conclusion, the strength of the Lebanese Army — and local and international confidence in its national role — is the result of its dedication to its military and patriotic mission and its faith in the aspirations of its people.

It commits fully to international resolutions, charters and human rights, and works within its country’s borders. It has never attacked anyone, but has always been and will remain poised to defend the nation’s sovereignty and independence. Any military support provided by friendly countries is in the interest of Lebanon and in the interest of regional stability. ♦

ALLIED

Against TERRORISM

SAUDI ARABIA HOSTS THE FIRST MEETING OF
THE ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION

UNIPATH STAFF



Vowing to “pursue terrorists until they are wiped from the face of the earth,” Saudi Arabia’s defense minister, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, assembled leaders from 41 nations in November 2017 to launch a counterterrorism alliance stretching from North Africa to Southeast Asia.

The aim of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) is to coordinate ideological, communications, military and financial strategies to thwart violent extremism. Prince Mohammed announced the multinational alliance in 2015, and the late 2017 gathering was the first of many meetings of counterterrorism leaders.

Counterterrorism efforts have been taking place in all of the coalition countries, but with no coordination among national authorities, Prince Mohammed said in his keynote speech at the conference in Riyadh. “This ends today, with this alliance.”

Just two days before the prince’s speech, terrorists murdered more than 300 worshippers in an Egyptian mosque in North Sinai province, an outrage not lost upon the assembled defense ministers and other leaders in Riyadh.

“Terrorist thought is alien to the message of Islam, and this coalition will root out terrorism,” said Dr. Mohammad bin Abdul Karim Al Issa, secretary-general of the Muslim World League based in Mecca.

Reiterating its commitment to confronting terrorism, Pakistan sent Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Chief of Army Staff Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa and Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif to Saudi Arabia.

Retired Pakistani Gen. Raheel Sharif was enlisted as commander in chief of the military branch of the IMCTC.

Gen. Raheel described the IMCTC’s “meaningful” and “historic” comprehensive strategy to defeat terrorism. He suggested member states mobilize and coordinate resources, exchange information and help each other expand counterterrorism capacity.

“We all have different strengths. For example, the Jordanians are great in urban counterterrorism. The Pakistanis are well-versed at operating in rural, less developed areas. Thus, resourcing will be key,” he said. “Using the resources of militaries which have enough — such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE [United Arab Emirates] — to help out nations with less, such as those in Africa, will optimize the coalition. Of course, intelligence sharing will be the key building block of our operational capacity and will also translate into greater gains, like ending the war in Afghanistan.”

Jordanian Minister of State for Media Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al Momani discussed the importance of effective communications in countering terrorist propaganda. The coalition should produce content that is not just factual and well-researched, but engaging enough to attract a wide audience.

“One of the most important roles that media outlets in Islamic countries should assume is to refute the false allegations that terrorist groups use to justify their crimes,” he said.

In the realm of counterterrorism finance, Dr. Ahmed Abdulkarim Alkholifey, chairman and governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority, promoted legal, regulatory and operational means to detect, block and seize illicit

“Over 40 states are sending a major signal that they are working together and will work in close cooperation in supporting each other’s efforts.”

~ His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud of Saudi Arabia poses with counterterrorism leaders from most of the world’s Muslim-majority nations in November 2017. REUTERS

PROPOSED IMCTC OPERATIONS SPAN FOUR COUNTERTERRORISM DOMAINS

IDEOLOGY

- Promote the essence of Islamic principles, teachings, culture and heritage.
- Align and correct the understanding of religious principles.
- Undertake a grassroots approach that promotes the Islamic value of moderation, welcomes diversity and values human life.
- Achieve a wide range of positive effects on intellectual, psychological and social levels related to terrorism throughout the Muslim world.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Counter the media discourse and appeal of violent extremists and terrorist organizations.
- Showcase the richness and cultural and intellectual diversity of Islam by promoting the moderate values of Islam.
- Promote and support credible influencers throughout the Islamic world to propagate the moderate values of Islam.

COUNTER TERRORISM FINANCING (CTF)

- Promote best practices and build coalition member countries' capabilities in countering terrorist financing.
- Promote a supportive environment to enable sharing of CTF-related information among member countries and international organizations.
- Support CTF competent authorities in member countries to possess required procedures and mechanisms for prevention, detection, reporting and prosecution operations related to CTF.
- Develop and operationalize legal, regulatory and operational frameworks related to CTF in member countries.

MILITARY

- Promote and build an effective system to discourage terrorist organizations and stop their attempts to cause harm to nations, communities and individuals.
- Strengthen and fill in critical gaps in counterterrorism military capabilities in member countries.
- Integrate military efforts with ideological and media campaigns.
- Provide assistance and support to coalition members in coordinating military operations to combat terrorism.
- Develop a framework to assist in military capacity building, training and knowledge sharing programs to counter terrorism in member and supporting nations.
- Provide a platform to member countries to seek military assistance in counterterrorism capacity building and military support from partners and supporting nations.



money transfers to violent extremists. Much of that cooperative work of depriving terrorists of money is done through the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force.

Representatives from nations throughout the Middle East extended support to the newly launched counterterrorism coalition.

Maj. Gen. Tawhid Tawfiq Abdel-Samie, Egypt's assistant minister of defense, explained that terrorists are no longer content to make political statements through violence, but aim to destroy sovereign states.

Then Kuwaiti Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad al-Khaled al-Hamad al-Sabah, vowed to "tighten the noose on terrorists all over the world" and prevent sectarian strife that threatens regional security.

"We send a vociferous message that no part of our society has been spared this plague of terrorism," Sheikh Mohammad said.

Bahraini Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Yousef al-Jalalmeh reported how extremists supported by hostile nations were intent on destabilizing his country through terrorist violence.

The UAE delegation was headed by Minister of State for Defense Mohammed bin Ahmad Al Bawardi. Lt. Gen. Ali Mohssen Saleh was Yemen's lead representative at the Riyadh conference.

Pakistani Gen. Raheel stressed that the coalition wasn't singling out any one nation for scrutiny, but rather aimed to take a universal approach to opposing violent extremism.

"This coalition is against terrorism," he said. "It is not against any country, sect or religion."

Prince Mohammed spoke about recommitting a coalition of nations to stop terrorism.

"Over 40 states are sending a major signal that they are working together and will work in close cooperation in supporting each other's efforts," he said. ♦



Kazakhstani Soldiers train in riot control during the U.S.-sponsored Steppe Eagle exercise in April 2017.



NEW
KINDS
OF

CONFLICT

**HYBRID WARFARE
THREATENS TO TEST THE
CAPACITIES OF MODERN MILITARIES**

MAJ. GEN. ASKHAT N. RYSPAYEV
HEAD OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY, KAZAKHSTAN
PHOTOS BY REUTERS

**The international situation is extremely complex,
tense and periodically intensifies the contradictions
between countries and ethnic, religious, political,
social and other groups, which cause various conflicts.**

Despite the world's declared desire to resolve conflicts by peaceful means, military force remains one of the main tools for resolving these problems. We see the need for an in-depth study of the causes and nature of military conflicts.

However, several trends have recently transformed the nature of military conflicts. Aggressors pursue their political and economic interests by compelling their opponents to accept their aims using traditional and nontraditional methods short of outright warfare.

The development of the means of armed struggle has a great influence on its content and on the nature of the conflicts. Armed struggle using the latest traditional and nontraditional means acquires new features.

In the media, we hear new terms such as “hybrid wars,” “cloud opponent,” “controlled chaos” and “cyber weapons.” The most widespread term used recently is “hybrid wars” or “hybrid threats.”

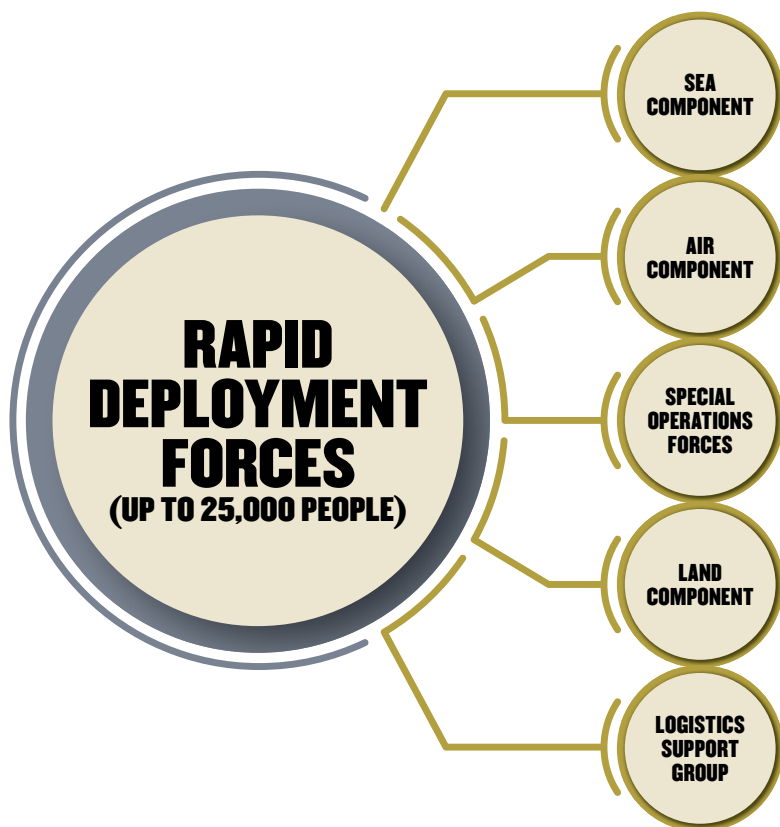
The strategies of hybrid wars and recommendations on confronting these hybrid threats have been developed in the United States and NATO. This analysis suggests fundamental changes

HYBRID WAR IMPLIES A WIDE RANGE OF HOSTILE ACTIONS, IN WHICH THE MILITARY PLAYS A RELATIVELY SMALL ROLE.

First, let us consider the concept of such conflicts. According to the definitions accepted worldwide and in Kazakhstan, military confrontation is a unifying and integrating concept, a form of resolving conflicts between conflicting parties with the use of military force to achieve certain political goals.

Troops from Kazakhstan secure a checkpoint during the Steppe Eagle exercise.





in the nature of war. The essence of these changes is to prepare for and influence the outcome of hybrid war using military and irregular components with the involvement of the civilian sector.

Hybrid war implies a wide range of hostile actions, in which the military plays a relatively small role. The main means of inflicting damage to the enemy are political, informational/psychological and economic. Its methods make it possible to achieve tangible results — they inflict territorial, political and economic damage to the enemy, disorganize an opponent's system of government and demoralize society.

Such war is not perceived as a war in the classical sense. Foreign Minister of Denmark Martin Lidegaard gave a fairly clear description of the hybrid war in 2014: "I wouldn't call it military, necessarily; it's a hybrid war where you have massive propaganda, provocations, stimulation of groups inside other countries, which is not warfare but which is something very hostile and close to warfare."

In traditional warfare, the main means for achieving goals are the use of regular armed forces, and other types of influences on the enemy are subordinated. To improve the ability of Western countries to confront new hybrid threats, close coordination is being established with ministries of the interior, involving police and gendarmerie forces to curb unconventional threats associated with propaganda campaigns, cyber attacks and actions by local separatists.

Conducting exercises to practice reactions to hybrid war is called one of the priorities of the NATO alliance. In Latvia, NATO has established a Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence to prepare and coordinate such exercises.

The concept of hybrid threats unites a wide range of hostile circumstances and intentions, such as cyber war, asymmetric low-intensity conflicts, global terrorism, piracy, illegal migration, corruption, ethnic and religious conflicts, security of resources, demographic challenges, transnational organized crime, globalization problems and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

An important step in the preparation for a new type of war is the decision by NATO to establish a combined-arms rapid deployment force that can be ready within 48 hours to conduct initial operations. It will include ground, air and naval forces, as well as special operations forces.

The complex composition of the NATO force suggests that this formation can be used to solve two fundamentally different tasks. One will be to prevent enemy sabotage and reconnaissance during the threatened period, to fight irregular formations on its own territory. The other is to organize subversive work on enemy territory by creating irregular network structures involving human and material resources.

A complex of hybrid threats is formed according to a predetermined strategic plan and affects a wide range of enemy military and civilian targets, including the population of the target country. The ultimate goal is to undermine the total power of the state and the positions and influence of the government within the country and in the international arena.

Thus, unlike other types of threats, the complex of hybrid threats is guided strictly by the chosen target object (the specific target country), has a clearly defined format and a predetermined goal, and is strategically central to the operation.

The successful implementation of a set of threats depends on the availability of a source capable of providing the necessary forces and facilities, as well as the access to them. Such a synergistic effect of the use of hybrid threats causes a special danger to the national security of a country. ♦

About the author: Maj. Gen. Askhat Ryspayev, Ph.D., has been head of Kazakhstan's National Defense University since 2012. Much of his military career has entailed helping rebuild his nation's military after it achieved independence from the former Soviet Union.

MODEL *of a* PROFESSIONAL

SOLDIER

*Iraqi Lt. Yasser Al-Aboudi was a skilled, courageous
and ethical Soldier in the battles to defeat Daesh*

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY IRAQI CTS MEDIA OFFICE

Stories of heroism continue to flow from Mesopotamia. The heroes of the Iraqi Armed Forces have put their lives on the line to expel the terrorist gangs and their deviant ideology out of this land where all sects have long co-existed in peace. The story of the heroic martyr Lt. Yasser Al-Aboudi, a member of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS), would move any reader. Such stories show that, through the generations, the land of Iraq continues to produce great men. We spoke to his comrade in arms, to his commanding officer and to his family about his childhood, dreams and bravery. We met his father first:





y dear son and friend Yasser was born in January 1991, at the peak of the First Gulf War. He was the third of six children, two sons and four daughters. The years passed and Yasser had grown. I

fondly remember when he stood beside me as I welcomed the guests to his wedding reception. He was a clever child and excelled at all stages of his education. He was a very moral person and respectful even when joking with his friends. One of his high school teachers, Muhammad Hadi, once told me that he had never laughed so much with a student as he did with Yasser, because he had an exceptional sense of humor, and his laughing was discrete. He was very self-reliant from a young age. He used to work through middle school, high school and university to earn his own spending money. His mother and I smiled when he offered to help us with household expenses. We could see determination in his eyes. He was not like other children. He cared mostly about studying and work. He used to tell me, "I will carry your burden because you have spent your youth caring for us."

As Yasser's father told us his memories, his face became wracked with sorrow:

"His childhood dream was to become an officer in the special forces, widely known and respected among Iraqis. At 14, Yasser would see the rows of special forces Soldiers in their black uniforms in the streets of Baghdad, arresting suspected terrorists or searching cars in dangerous areas. When Yasser saw them, he felt proud and wanted to be one of them. The chance came when he was admitted to the Fourth Military College for the counterterrorism course. He graduated and was ranked 19th out of about 235 students."

After he had graduated from the Counter-Terrorism Academy, he was assigned to the Maysan Counterterrorism Battalion's legal advisory team. However, Yasser had not joined Counter-Terrorism to remain in an office in the South while war raged in the West and the North. He dreamed of going to the battlefield. This dream came true, and he was assigned to join his friends in Anbar.

Yasser's closest friend and comrade in arms, 1st Lt. Youssef Ali, spoke proudly of him:

"I first met Yasser in April 2014 when we enrolled in the Fourth Military College in Nasiriyah. We trained in the third platoon with him. Our friendship began when we were students, and I will never forget our time there together. The two of us lived close to each other in the capital, Baghdad. We became friends from the first day. His friends liked him so much, and he was always smiling and cracking jokes.

"Yasser was exceptionally devoted to military life and was very brave. He was not afraid of dangerous training exercises like rappelling out of helicopters or climbing high towers. He was the first to finish the exercises and loved to train and learn. He was appointed corporal in the platoon because he excelled at his duties, learned quickly and was a natural leader.

"After we graduated and joined the selection course for Counter-Terrorism, chance brought us together for a second time. Despite the hardships and intensity of training at the Counter-Terrorism Academy, Yasser excelled and was one of the best students, especially at shooting. He was a sharpshooter and was determined to finish the course. He even encouraged students who collapsed and decided to leave the course. He knew, deep down, that special forces operations required exceptionally strong men."

The Counter-Terrorism Service has an excellent tradition of assigning graduates through a lottery carried out under the supervision of the head of the Counter-Terrorism Service. Yasser received his assignment to the Maysan Battalion.



“ DESPITE THE SHORTAGE OF RATIONS AND THAT SUPPLY LINES HAD BEEN CUT, YASSER AND HIS SOLDIERS SHARED THEIR WATER AND FOOD WITH CIVILIANS. ... THE SOLDIERS LEARNED FROM THEIR LEADER TO PUT THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF CITIZENS ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE. ”

~ 1st Lt. Youssef Ali

Lt. Youssef continued: “We were indescribably proud when we knew that we were assigned together to the Maysan Battalion. Yasser was assigned to the forward headquarters of the regiment in the al-Bakr neighborhood in the Anbar governorate one month after I was assigned there in 2015. The road from Maysan to Anbar was very difficult because Daesh had entered the area, set up positions and cut off the roads. Convoys, therefore, had to use dusty roads. When Yasser arrived, his black uniform and his weapon had turned the color of dust. Despite the difficult journey and exhaustion, he refused my offer to rest a little bit. He insisted on touring the area of operations.”

The morale of the troops was tested during the battles for Fallujah, given the difficult topography and that supply lines were cut off. Yasser’s determination and encouragement kept his unit fighting.

“We both participated in the battles to liberate Ramadi and Fallujah. He held the position of deputy commander of the Second Company. We spent two weeks at the Nuaimiya berm in Fallujah. It was known for the fierceness of the fighting, the difficult topography, and the lack of food and water. However, this did not frighten Yasser, whose smile eased the hearts of men and raised morale.”

Lt. Yasser became well-known for his courage, and he was careful to ensure the well-being of his men and the maintenance of their equipment. He was not a man who would leave a wounded or dead man on the battlefield. He assured his men that they would have what they needed, and that he would not leave them behind if they were wounded or killed.

Staff Col. Arkan Jalal al-Tikriti, commander of the Maysan Battalion, told *Unipath* the following story:

“Daesh attacked the Federal Police in the Hasiba region,



east of Ramadi, and managed to destroy some defenses. We received orders from Combined Joint Operation Command (CJOC) to deploy our unit to the Hasiba East region. We moved from Habbaniyah toward Hasiba. The journey through the desert was long and difficult, and we were surrounded by Daesh traps and ambushes. Clashes with Daesh began after we arrived, and during the battle, Lt. Yasser’s group was hit by a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED). Yasser was wounded in the shoulder. Force protection procedures required that the

site should have been abandoned, given the possibility that the enemy would attack with another SVBIED followed by troops, as this was a common Daesh tactic. However, when Yasser learned that he had lost one of his Soldiers, he decided to climb to a rooftop to look for him. The force of the explosion had launched the body toward nearby houses. He didn’t leave until the body was recovered. This earned him the trust of his troops.”

Lt. Youssef recounted another situation that occurred during the battle of Mosul:

“We left exactly at 3 o’clock on the orders of the colonel toward our target in east Mosul. The Al-Zahra neighborhood battle was the fiercest. Daesh fought desperately and used suicide bombers and traps extensively. Our mission was to hold the main street to cut off suicide bombers and VBIEDs to prevent them from hitting the advanced columns. However, we faced a major challenge, since all of the houses of the street were shanties except for a single two-story building. The shanties were low and had metal ceilings. In other words, there was nowhere safe for us to set up base and protect ourselves. The area was open and highly vulnerable to VBIED attacks.

“After a difficult night of fighting, Daesh launched a fierce

attack on our positions at first light, recognizing the exhaustion of our fighters. However, Yasser led the battle from the rooftop, preventing the enemy from moving, and we were able to hold our position. On the second day, the commanders sent a new officer to lead the company so that Yasser could get some rest. However, he decided to stay with the company, saying that he would share its fate.”

Yasser was a brave fighter who refused to leave anything behind that the enemy could use to kill his friends. Col. Jalal recalled the time when Yasser endangered his life to retrieve a heavy machine gun that Soldiers had left behind as they pulled back:

“On May 19, 2015, the enemy launched a widespread assault on our district. Orders came to withdraw from the location. In these circumstances, Yasser stood out as a courageous leader. He withdrew his Soldiers from their positions without any losses and without losing any ammunition or weapons. There was also a heavy machine gun (50 caliber) detachment at point 60. It had a strategic position that overlooked all of the roads. Yasser knew that the detachment had withdrawn and left its machine guns behind.

“Even though these were not his positions or weapons, he knew that leaving these effective weapons in the hands of Daesh would cause heavy losses. He went with one of the Soldiers, in the midst of heavy gunfire, to retrieve the machine guns. The unit’s leadership witnessed him endangering himself to prevent Daesh from capturing the weapons. Yasser and I were the last of the unit to withdraw. The enemy was only a few meters away from them, and bullets were coming in from all directions. This did not deter Yasser from bringing the weapons down from the second floor before withdrawing.”

In addition to his great courage, this heroic man was also very morally upright and respected the local inhabitants. Martyr Yasser’s ability to deal with civilians in liberated areas was a source of pride for the fighters of the Counter-Terrorism Service and earned him the respect of civilians. There are many stories of their affection for and trust in him.

Yasser’s father spoke of how proud he, his wife and Yasser’s sisters were when Yasser called to tell them the following story, which speaks volumes about his excellent upbringing:

“During the cleansing operation of a neighborhood in Ramadi, Yasser came across a large amount of gold in a home. The inhabitants had quickly left the area during the invasion by Daesh. In the presence of his men, Yasser counted and documented the finds and sent them to headquarters along with information on the house to ensure that they could be returned to their owners.”

Lt. Youssef shared another story that exemplified Yasser’s ethics:

“While searching Mosul’s left bank, we entered several houses where the inhabitants were still present. Yasser did not allow any of his Soldiers to act inappropriately toward the girls. He advised the fighters to respect the inhabitants and treat them as their own kin. He was a very brave gentleman.”

Lt. Youssef paused in a moment of silence before continuing:

“We were ordered to search the Al-Muhandiseen neighborhood on the left bank for weapons and terrorist safe houses. We raided a house that was supposed to be a den of Daesh fighters, but found only girls since the terrorists had fled. Yasser did not allow the full force to enter, but went in with two of his fighters to search. They conducted the inspection very respectfully and collected evidence. To reassure one of the girls, who was trembling with fear, Yasser urged her to consider them brothers who were there to protect her. After completing the inspection, he ordered the Soldiers to give the girls food and water.”

Col. Jalal recounted an unusual story:

“A few days after the liberation of the left bank, the city suffered an electricity blackout. The neighborhood had a generator and needed fuel, and Yasser acquired the address and the telephone number of the tanker driver who normally brought the fuel. The tanker was located 30 kilometers away, and because Daesh used them as VBIEDs, the security forces had forbidden their use. Yasser called me and requested my approval to bring the tanker. I agreed to the idea. After a lot of effort on his behalf, we received approval to bring the tanker. Yasser spent two hours calling the checkpoints along the way. When the fuel arrived, the inhabitants were thrilled to get electricity and very grateful to Lt. Yasser’s efforts to restore power only days after liberation.”

Lt. Youssef described how Lt. Yasser treated starving children in the poor neighborhoods of Mosul:

“Despite the shortage of rations and that supply lines had been cut, Yasser and his Soldiers shared their water and food with civilians. Lt. Yasser carried water and food during his patrols through his area of responsibility, which he distributed to the children we found in the streets. The Soldiers learned from their leader to put the safety and comfort of citizens above everything else and were eager to share their food with locals. This helped keep civilians on our side, and in turn they provided intelligence on the locations of terrorist safe houses.”

As for the story of Yasser’s martyrdom, here is how his friend described it:

Yasser was in an ambush house containing an anti-tank missile launcher. His orders were to cut off Daesh movements and to hunt their VBIEDs before they attacked our advance troops. The missile launcher destroyed a number of Daesh VBIEDs and transport vehicles. However, the house was targeted by enemy bombardment. Yasser was in a neighboring house during the strike and rushed to provide first aid to the wounded and to see if anyone had been killed. He could have sent one of his men, but to provide an accurate assessment to the commanders and to ensure the safety of his fighters, he elected to go himself.

The house was struck a second time while he was inside, leading to his martyrdom. He joined the other martyrs, leaving behind tales that speak to his heroism and bravery.

These stories are retold by his fellow officers and throughout the homes and schools he helped liberate and are reflected in the eyes of the displaced people reassured by the kindness of that sun-tanned young Soldier from the South. ♦

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL NAVIES



A Royal Navy of Oman vessel maneuvers in open water. Multinational exercises are an important tool for training naval leaders across the Middle East. PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS KEVIN J. STEINBERG/U.S. NAVY

INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS LEARN VALUABLE LESSONS AT THE U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

UNIPATH STAFF

When the Royal Navy of Oman decided to hold a major naval exercise with Great Britain's Royal Navy for the first time in 17 years, it reached out to the U.S. Naval War College for expertise.

The Naval War College had just started a new, 12-week program for midlevel multinational naval officers called the International Maritime Staff Operator Course (I-MSOC). It trains officers to support complex maritime operations.

Omani Lt. Omar Salim al Ismaili leaped at the opportunity to attend I-MSOC. He had been tasked with helping to plan the joint exercise with Great Britain — called Swift Sword 3 — and attended I-MSOC in 2017.

Lt. Omar was among 15 officers from 13 nations — including Saudi Arabia and Pakistan — enrolled in the course. It's designed for naval lieutenants, lieutenant commanders and commanders. The program was held mostly at the War College in Providence, Rhode Island, in the United States, although trips to installations such as NATO Headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, provided even more opportunities for training and development.

"My goal is to utilize the knowledge gained at I-MSOC of the U.S. Navy planning process to develop Swift Sword," Lt. Omar said of his role in planning the 2018 naval exercise. "Overall, I found I-MSOC invaluable."



Yahliya Al Oufi, an Omani advisor in the Sultan's Armed Forces, asks a question during a discussion on counterpiracy at the U.S. Naval War College's 15th Regional Alumni Symposium in the Omani capital of Muscat. DANIEL S. MARCINIAK/U.S. NAVY



“CHANGES IN TODAY’S INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT HAVE EXPANDED THE CURRENT SECURITY SIGNIFICANCE OF MARITIME AND POLITICAL INTERESTS. THE IMPORTANCE OF SECURE SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATION HAS INCREASED.”

U.S. Naval War College alumnus Rear Adm. Abdullah bin Khamis Al Raisi, commander of the Royal Navy of Oman

Established in 1884 to raise the professionalism of U.S. officers, the Naval War College quickly opened its doors to international officers. Its list of international alumni has grown to more than 4,500 from about 130 countries. Roughly 10 percent of those officers have risen to be chiefs of their countries’ navies.

“The U.S. Naval War College has a close and enduring relationship with all navies of the world, including the Middle East and Central and South Asia,” said Dean of International Programs Thomas Mangold. “Alumni have, at one time or another, commanded most of those navies.”

The college stays actively engaged with those international officers through its Regional Alumni Symposia. In October 2017, the 15th Regional Alumni Symposium was held in Muscat, Oman, and attracted naval personnel from countries such as Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Symposium topics included international maritime norms and standards; counterterrorism, protecting maritime infrastructure, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; counterpiracy; and interoperability in maritime operations.

Rear Adm. Abdullah bin Khamis Al Raisi, commander of the Royal Navy of Oman, attended the symposium as a 1990 graduate of the War College and voiced support for international cooperation to protect vulnerable maritime networks on which Oman and other nations rely.

“Changes in today’s international security environment have expanded the current security significance of maritime and political interests,” Rear Adm. Abdullah said. “The importance of secure sea lines of communication has increased.”

Another Naval War College program that draws attendance from the Middle East is the Combined Force Maritime Component Commander Course, begun in 2006 and held most recently in Bahrain in September 2017.

Senior naval commanders from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates attended this regionally focused course that provides a forum to deepen relationships among multinational partners. It was hosted by Vice Adm. John Aquilino, the then-newly appointed commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

Graduates of the weeklong course have gone on to assume commands of multinational missions as part of the Combined Maritime Forces-Combined Task Forces 150, 151 and 152. Those task forces protect the Arabian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf



Attendees of the 15th Regional Alumni Symposium in Muscat in October 2017 DANIEL S. MARCINIAK/U.S. NAVY

of Aden, the Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean from piracy, smuggling and terrorism.

“About one-dozen flag officers in the region meet every year in Bahrain to attend the Coalition Force Maritime Component Commanders Course, where they discuss current developments and promote ever greater levels of cooperation,” Dean Mangold said.

The International Wargaming Course is another program designed with non-U.S. officers in mind.

Held the first time in June 2018, the course teaches officers the fundamentals of wargaming so that they can duplicate those efforts within their own navies. The War College developed the program to boost operational effectiveness without the expense of launching ships for larger-scale naval exercises.

“At the completion of the course, participants have an improved understanding of the value of wargaming as a technique to gain insights into complex or ill-structured problems and the process used at the Naval War College to design, execute and analyze wargames,” said retired U.S. Navy Capt. Richard LaBranche, head of the college’s wargaming department. ♦

U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REGIONAL ALUMNI NUMBERS

40 - Bahrain	28 - Lebanon
64 - Egypt	27 - Oman
5 - Iraq	89 - Pakistan
24 - Jordan	26 - Qatar
7 - Kazakhstan	73 - Saudi Arabia
29 - Kuwait	45 - United Arab Emirates

457 TOTAL WITH 11 HEADS OF NAVY/SERVICE

Achievements of Afghan Women

MARTHA SCHAEFFER
NATO SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMPONENT
COMMAND-AFGHANISTAN




More than 4,000 women are engaged in the Afghan National Defense Security Forces

When the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 and the Taliban seized control of the government, Afghan women watched as the Taliban terminated their rights overnight. A country where women were granted the right to vote in 1919, a year before the United States, and guaranteed the right to education and to work in 1964 no longer allowed women to participate as equal members of society. During restrictive male-dominated Taliban rule, they banned women from work places, schools, and from appearing in public without a male chaperone. In almost every aspect of public society, women became invisible. In the 17 years since the Taliban regime fell, the status of women has improved, although stigmas from the repressive Taliban rule remain. In 2004, the new Afghan constitution reinstated rights that women possessed previously, setting aside seats in the upper and lower parliamentary houses for women. During the 2014 elections, 308 women ran for provincial councils that have no set-aside seats; 39 percent of them won.

As women regain public roles, there is room for hope. Of the 9 million children enrolled in school in Afghanistan, 40 percent are girls. More than three quarters of the population supports women working outside the home. Women serving in the Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF), including the 120-plus women in the Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF), have doubled their numbers in the past four years and now total 4,400, or 1.4 percent.

NATO began tracking gender statistics in 2013, and five years later more than 2 percent of the Afghan National Police and 0.6 percent of the Afghan National Army are female. Afghanistan's neighbor Pakistan, which has allowed women to serve in the military since 1947, employs only 1.4 percent in the police and 0.6 percent in the military.

While the numbers seem encouraging, they still fall well short of the ambitious 10 percent goal the Afghan Ministry of Interior, which oversees the Afghan National Police, wants to reach by 2023.



Female Soldiers train near Kabul in March 2018.

STAFF SGT. DOUGLAS ELLIS/
U.S. AIR FORCE



Women of the Afghan National Army attend a graduation ceremony at the Afghan Military Academy in Kabul.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



“No society has ever successfully transitioned from being a conflict-ridden society to a developing society unless women were a part of the mainstream.”

~ U.S. Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, retired

But diversifying Afghanistan’s security forces is important to Afghan stability. As retired U.S. Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen stated in 2016: “No society has ever successfully transitioned from being a conflict-ridden society to a developing society unless women were a part of the mainstream.”

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 reaffirms women’s rights, and in 2015, Afghanistan released its National Action Plan (NAP), viewed as a tool to translate the resolution into reality. The NAP upholds constitutional gender equality, acknowledging “durable peace and stability in Afghanistan requires the participation of women in political and social life.” The plan also admits that though there are increased numbers of women in police, military and civil service, there are “not enough to respond to the emerging needs of women.”

NATO and the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan assign gender advisors to military operations. In the case of Afghanistan and special operations forces, these advisors perform their duties under the NATO Train, Advise, Assist (TAA) mission in Afghanistan, working to increase women’s representation at all levels of the ANDSF while continuously lobbying for commitment and support for female participation and retention.

One gender advisor in the NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan (NSOCC-A) expressed pride in “meeting the women serving in the ASSF and creating opportunities for them to share their ideas, experiences, concerns and needs. I call them superheroes. I really admire these women and their willingness to serve their country, despite the issues that make it more challenging for them than service in the police or military is for Western women.”

Recruiting women to security work remains a challenge — even more so recruiting for the ASSF. These are elite, special operations forces with higher requirements for admission. Promoting quality over quantity, all ASSF members, male and female, are specially selected and trained.

Women operating as part of the ASSF may be police with General Command of Police Special Units assigned to the Ministry of Interior or Soldiers serving with the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command or the Special Mission Wing.

The duties of many of the positions within ASSF require additional specialized training for sensitive missions and are harder to fill. In many cases, especially within the police forces, women's training is continuous; the only time it's interrupted is for operational deployments.

"My favorite part is the investigation and physical training," said one young Afghan policewoman from Kapisa. Another woman, from Ghazni, said, "I heard about the mission and wanted to be a part of the operations. I enjoy the training and I've learned a lot of things. My favorite is close quarters battle."

While the overall number of women in ASSF is small compared to the larger ANDSF, that number has doubled in just over three years. Women serve in many capacities — as medics, administrative support, finance officers and police. As

numbers grow, the overall capability for meaningful participation by women in nontraditional roles grows, hand in hand with increased opportunities for career progression.

A NATO member who works the TAA mission with ASSF women in Afghanistan said, "Afghans see the value added in a highly trained Soldier. Regardless of gender, if we continue to assist in the training development and operational effects of women in the ASSF, their successes will increase interest and acceptance over time."

Modeled on the cultural support teams employed by the U.S. Army, Afghan female tactical platoons (FTP) are elite light infantry units that specialize in assaults on conventional targets. Trained in combat skills, marksmanship and cultural skills, the women in FTPs work alongside men during operations that may require interaction or engagement with women and children.

Additional opportunities exist for women serving with the ANDSF. Women can participate in the Ministry of Defense's Gender Occupational Opportunity Development (GOOD) program. GOOD offers additional training in English, Dari

**Female Afghan
Soldiers train
outside Kabul.**

STAFF SGT. DOUGLAS ELLIS/
U.S. AIR FORCE





and job skills such as computer literacy that can enhance career development. The program will soon expand to the Ministry of Interior to encompass even more of the women serving in the ASSF.

“I believe their success can be attributed to the advisor support, the best trainers and equipment, a decent work environment and additional leave opportunities and pay,” said an NSOCC-A advisor who works with the FTPs.

In many ways, the women in the ASSF aren’t just taking on the Taliban and other terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan today, they’re also taking on their own culture. ASSF tashkils — the government’s official list of personnel by position and rank — will see a large increase in female-only positions over the next few years. But the path to real parity may not be so straightforward.

Literacy rates are low. When only 17 percent of women can read and write, the overall pool of qualified ASSF candidates shrinks significantly, although conversely, it follows that the women who are accepted will be better educated and more able to work in a wider range of duties.

Sexual harassment and gender discrimination remain a problem within the Afghan police and military. The Ministry of the Interior has a signed sexual harassment policy while the Ministry of Defense policy is in draft format, but compliance mechanisms are lacking.

Marked differences exist even in Afghan tribal cultures. Pashtuns tend to be more socially conservative; Hazara and Tajik families are more accepting of female relatives working. A number of the young women interviewed are Hazara and indicated their families were supportive of their work. One said her uncle actually encouraged her to join the ASSF.

Attractive recruitment and training initiatives are offered within Afghanistan’s military and police forces. Within the ANDSF, almost 200 women are working toward bachelor’s degrees, and several women completed their first year of college under a scholarship program. There are special incentives for day care, re-contracting bonuses, training and education allowances and opportunities for overseas training. Female-only barracks, bathrooms, gyms and classrooms are being built throughout Afghanistan to ensure women can live and train safely.

High-profile instances of women breaking barriers in the ASSF and the larger ANDSF continue to inspire other women to volunteer to serve their country. Brig. Gen. Khatool Mohammadzai, the Afghan paratrooper who has over 600 jumps to her credit and is the first woman in Afghan history to achieve general officer rank, has proven women can carve out careers in the military, both as an enlisted paratrooper and later as a commissioned officer.

As more women reap the benefits of education, enjoy meaningful careers and help to support their families, they also pave the way for their sisters, daughters and nieces to shape their own futures. ♦





COMMANDING *Jordanian Marines*

GRANTING AUTHORITY TO
OFFICERS ON THE GROUND
IMPROVES PERFORMANCE IN
UNCONVENTIONAL OPERATIONS



UNIPATH STAFF

Lt. Col. Hisham Khaleel Mubarak Al Jarrah, commanding officer of the 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion, recently hosted the Regional Marine Symposium in Aqaba with U.S. and Middle Eastern counterparts. Much of the discussion concerned strengthening these compact, flexible forces for operations against terrorists. Lt. Col. Hisham sat down with *Unipath* to discuss enhancing the performance of his battalion by giving more command flexibility to noncommissioned and junior officers on the ground.

Unipath: How did you come up with the idea to give noncommissioned officers in your unit wider authority?

Lt. Col. Hisham: Attacks around the world have shown that terrorist tactics are improving and that terrorists have increasingly entrenched themselves within cities. Armies, therefore, have started to adopt unconventional military tactics and to rely on lightly armed small groups of Soldiers that can maneuver and adapt quickly on the battlefield. Unconventional warfare demands high maneuverability and adaptability, and plans change unexpectedly. Therefore, noncommissioned officers and squad leaders must be trained to lead in battle at the platoon and squad level within their sectors and to have the authority to adapt plans to the variables of the battlefield. The idea began when I became convinced that the flow of work requires the involvement and presence of noncommissioned officers, who work every day with

peers of similar ranks, and the lower rank privates. This began first by training a group of noncommissioned officers with the aim of increasing their expertise. They were then inserted into the work flow to get them used to taking responsibility and to increase their self-confidence. They were given some authority and were empowered to make decisions within their leadership positions. We are working hard to bring noncommissioned officers to a level that qualifies them and allows them to command a section or a squad on the battlefield confidently, efficiently and capably.

Unipath: In your capacity as commander of the 77th Royal Jordanian Marines, what importance do you place on training junior officers?

Lt. Col. Hisham: For a small unit to fulfill its role, all ranks need to participate in the task. This is true for any small-scale military unit. Junior officers and noncommissioned officers are the backbone and the core that allow the unit to carry out its tactical and administrative duties; consequently, they should also play a fundamental role in its management and training. Our work with our partners in the U.S. Marine Corps has taught us that focusing on training helps small units perform consistently and increases their fighting abilities, in addition to strengthening teamwork among unit members and increasing their cohesiveness and effectiveness under pressure.

Unipath: Tell us about the kind of training that junior officers and noncommissioned officers receive.

Lt. Col. Hisham: Our training is divided into three distinct types. First, there is basic training, in which individuals receive all the training they need to make the transition from civilian life to military life and to work in the ranks of the Armed Forces. After that, they receive specialized training that allows them to become Jordanian Marines. Further training is required for promotion, including technical training that allows a Marines noncommissioned officer to specialize in a particular field, such as being a section leader, fire leader, explosives expert, medic, machine gunner, warrant officer or squadron sergeant-major.

Unipath: Have you participated in joint training with U.S. forces?

Lt. Col. Hisham: The 77th Marine Battalion started training and conducting exercises with the U.S. Marine Corps in 2008, and these continue up to the present. They play an important role in developing our training and in raising the efficiency of the battalion Soldiers and officers through enriching their experience and developing their skills. It's well-known that the U.S. Marine Corps has existed for





more than 200 years, and this means it has extensive field experience. Our partnership with them has greatly improved the battalion's performance and increased its ability to work jointly with other units, allowing it to better carry out its duties. Joint training with an advanced force like the U.S. Marines also improves Soldiers' morale and qualifies them to carry out joint military actions, which has become imperative in fighting terrorist threats. The accomplishments of our counterparts in Iraq are an excellent example of what can be achieved by working with partners. They successfully fought a series of fierce battles against the gangs of Daesh. The effort was coordinated between the coalition forces and the Iraqi Armed Forces. This is why we need to ensure that we conduct joint trainings, because they get our Soldiers accustomed to working in a joint-action environment.

The 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion trains with U.S. Marines during the Eager Lion exercise in May 2017.

STAFF SGT. VITALIY RUSAVSKIY/U.S. MARINE CORPS

Unipath: In what way do you think focusing on training junior officers will develop the unit's skills?

Lt. Col. Hisham: Naturally, junior officers welcome training and knowledge in all fields. A good officer is the one who continuously seeks to improve himself and to learn. However, the focus of their training should be on subjects that can enrich their knowledge and abilities in the field, help them to carry out their duties and enable them to make the right decisions in the field, in line with the level of their rank, responsibility and ability to manage their unit in the field.

Unipath: Does this program to train junior officers to lead small units exist across all of the Jordan Armed Forces?

Lt. Col. Hisham: Yes, it is present across the entire Armed Forces, taking into consideration the different structures and types of units. What differentiates us from other units is our continuous training with the U.S. Marines, which increases the experience of the battalion's Soldiers in Marine tactics.

Unipath: The noncommissioned officers of the Royal Marine Battalion have experience in leading and managing the affairs of the unit. Do you think that building a cohesive force requires training and preparing professional noncommissioned officers?

Lt. Col. Hisham: Undoubtedly, a well-trained Soldier serves the unit better than one with little knowledge and training. Preparation and training are fundamental to building a cohesive unit and force that can carry out its responsibilities and missions as best as possible. The unit cannot succeed if it does not have exceptional and competent noncommissioned officers who enjoy the confidence of their subordinates and who can lead their sections and units. After all, they are closest to the Soldiers and act as a link between them and the officers. Moreover, the fact that noncommissioned officers train and fight alongside the Soldiers makes noncommissioned officers close to the Soldiers, so they know their skills and issues. This makes it easier to lead the unit and brings the Soldiers closer to their officers.

Unipath: What role do international partnerships play in supporting you in this program?

Lt. Col. Hisham: They improve our skills and knowledge. International forces help develop our abilities, training, and professionalism in our work. The U.S. Marines have shared their extensive tactical and counterterrorism expertise, as well as expertise in humanitarian operations. In addition to specialized field training and logistical support, we have gained practical, professional and administrative experience that has raised the level of our work. It is a successful experience with the U.S. Marines by all standards. ♦



Loyal to IRAQ

Kurdish Soldiers serve with distinction
in the Iraqi Armed Forces against Daesh

MASTER SGT. WALEED KHALED SALEH MAZOURI BARZANI

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 1ST SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, IRAQI COUNTER-TERRORISM SERVICE

I joined the Iraqi Special Operations Command in 2003 and have had the honor to participate in most of the battles of liberation. I remain a loyal Soldier dedicated to defending Iraq, its unity and its sovereignty.

The reason I joined this force is that its fighters exhibit extraordinary professionalism and loyalty to the homeland. I am proud to be part of anti-terrorism forces whose members include all Iraqi factions without exception and enjoy a unique relationship, whose spirit embodies teamwork, familiarity, love and loyalty to Iraq.

We are brothers in arms and our goal is the security and independence of the homeland. When we fight terrorism, we do not consider ourselves Arabs, Kurds, Sunnis or Shiites, but only Iraqis. I have participated in most of the battles against

al-Qaida in Iraq, and in the operation “Charge of the Knights” against the terrorist gangs in Basra and Baghdad, and in all battles against Daesh.

We have fought terrorist organizations, whatever their names and sectar-

history of my people, but I am equally proud that I am an Iraqi and a fighter defending the land and security of Iraq. I live in the province of Dohuk in the north of the country, but I have been in Baghdad for 15 years and participated

We are brothers in arms and
our goal is the security and
independence of the homeland.

ian affiliations. We have not hesitated to hit any group that wants to tamper with the security of the country.

As a Kurd, I take great pride in being part of this strategic force. I am proud of the Kurdish heritage and the

in all the battles in defense of a unified Iraq under a constitution that protects all segments of society.

We do not favor any ethnicity or sect. You will find Kurd and Arab, Christian and Muslim fighters living



Master Sgt. Waleed Khaled Saleh Mazouri Barzani
IRAQI COUNTER-TERRORISM SERVICE

like brothers in the barracks or in the trenches, and we protect each other from the treachery of terrorism.

Sometimes I spend my vacations visiting fellow fighters from Basra or Maysan. I get to know their families and spend fun times together with them. Especially in the winter, when Dohuk's weather is cold, I head south to find the homes of my friends open to me with their traditional Iraqi hospitality.

During the summer, I invite them to visit Dohuk and enjoy the beautiful weather as heat waves envelop southern Iraq. These heroes have become my family. The people of Nasiriyah became my friends because of my repeated visits to them, and my neighbors in Dohuk became acquainted with all my friends from the southern provinces when we have gathered during holidays and other occasions.

In addition to that, one of my brothers from the south asked me to help move his mother to one of Dohuk's specialized hospitals. I did so and received his family in my house for more than two weeks until his mother healed and returned to their province.

These stories are not unique to me — they exemplify the principles and values of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS). “We do not have a party or a sect; we are loyal Soldiers to protect the security and sovereignty of Iraq, and we are fighting under the banner of one Iraq,” our commander, Staff Gen. Talib Shaghathi Alkenani, said at one of his news conferences. “This is what all the members of the Counter-Terrorism Service believe.”

The CTS is the safety valve for the security of Iraq, and we as combatants know the importance of working together outside a narrow ethnic or sectarian perspective. We know that the strength and coherence of our force stems from our belief in the unity of Iraq and the flag of Iraq.

In one battle, I was injured and needed an immediate blood transfusion, and my companions made a quick donation of their blood. Today, the blood of Maysan, Nasiriyah and

Basra flows through my body. This is proof that we do not recognize affiliations other than belonging to Iraq, and we pray that God forever protects these brothers and the love between us.

When on leave, I eagerly awaited meeting my friends in Baghdad, a place that holds many memories for me. We went together to the historic cafes on Al-Rasheed Street, Al-Zawra Park, enjoying refreshments and eating masgouf fish on the banks of the Tigris on Abu Nawas Street. As I passed through the Karrada district near the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance, I remembered the heroic events in which I participated — liberating hostages and killing terrorists belong-

those we saw in the world wars. The fighting was fierce, and we stood in the same trenches — Arabs and Kurds — to liberate our people in Mosul. After the fighting, my comrades and I donated our salaries to help displaced people whose situation was dire.

Of course, the war against these gangs is a fateful war for Iraqis, and all factions of Iraq have fought with honor. In the battles north of Mosul, we were working together with our brothers in the peshmerga forces and tribal forces to liberate those villages. We shared gear and food with them. The peshmerga fighters played a significant role in securing supply routes for us as we fought together to expel terrorists.

“We do not have a party or a sect; we are loyal Soldiers to protect the security and sovereignty of Iraq, and we are fighting under the banner of one Iraq. This is what all the members of the Counter-Terrorism Service believe.”

— Staff Gen. Talib Shaghathi Alkenani

ing to the so-called Islamic State of Iraq in 2010.

The family of one of our Christian fellow fighters was inside the church, and we were able to save them from death and celebrated their safety upon completion of the mission.

I know Baghdad as I know Dohuk, and I have special relationships with the cities of Iraq where I had the honor to defend my people and liberate them from the clutches of terrorism — Jurf Al Sakhar, Fallujah, Yusufiyah, Tarmiyah, Sadr City, Mosul and Basra. The blood of Kurds, Arabs, Sunnis, Shiites and Christians has mixed in every one of these spots in the land of Iraq where we battled terrorists.

Especially in the battles to liberate Mosul, the tales of valor exceeded

When I go to Dohuk wearing my special operations uniform, people greet me with proud smiles, and Kurds ask me to pose for souvenir pictures. The Counter-Terrorism Service has earned great respect in the provinces of the region because of its national orientation and the ethics of its fighters. It is a disciplined force loyal to Iraq.

We owe it to our commander, Gen. Alkenani, for building a distinctive force loyal to Iraq. He supervised the training curricula and lectures that reinforced love of the homeland and rejection of sectarianism in the hearts of the fighters. Therefore, we find no one among us who stands outside the unit, and we respond firmly in opposing those who want to spread talk of sectarianism and ethnic separatism. ♦

DETECTING PIRACY

A multinational task force launches a mission to secure the seas between Yemen and Somalia



Crew members from the Pakistani ship Aslat, part of CTF 150, board a dhow on which 5 tons of hashish were discovered.

Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, under the command of Commodore Yusuf Almannai of the Royal Bahrain Navy, launched a counterpiracy mission called Operation Hamad in February 2018 to deter criminals on the waters between Yemen and Somalia.

The multinational task force, bolstered by a unit from Oman, is cooperating with a ship from the European Union's Naval Forces (EUNAVFOR) to establish a strong naval presence in the Gulf of Aden, the Socotra Gap and the waters near Somalia.

Commodore Almannai stressed the need not just to suppress piracy but to build cooperation among multinational units and between military and merchant vessels operating in high-risk areas.

Although Somali piracy declined after peaking in 2011, thanks to the combined efforts of global naval forces, Gulf Cooperation Council nations want to preserve the peace with continuing deterrence.

"The coordination expected to be achieved during Operation Hamad will again prove that we are stronger and ready together," said Commodore Almannai, who commanded the task force from November 2017 to February 2018.

Planners labored to ensure the best use of limited naval resources in counterpiracy operations. This includes tapping into nonmilitary resources such as commercial shipping networks with vast experience in these troubled waters.

In the lead-up to Operation Hamad, Commodore Almannai's task force also conducted engagements with various Gulf Cooperation

countries — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

CTF 151 is part of the Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Two other combined task forces — CTF 150 and 152 — broaden the geographical range of the CMF to include the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

Thousands of trading vessels ply these waters every day, including tankers carrying vital oil to export markets through the Straits of Hormuz. But the traffic also includes drug and weapons smugglers and other criminals.

CTF 150 logged a notable triumph in February 2018. A coalition ship from Pakistan called the Aslat seized 5 tons of hashish from a dhow sailing in the Arabian Sea, bringing to \$1 billion the value of narcotics seized in just two months.

In Operation Hamad, CTF 151 and EUNAVFOR are taking their relationship to a new level with a common goal of reducing piracy. Naval leaders noted that each organization possesses unique strengths and capabilities.

For example, CMF is bolstering the mission by providing air power to help patrol the waters between Yemen and Somalia. Information will also be drawn from the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operation, an organization through which merchant vessels can voluntarily report their activities to naval fleets tasked with protecting them.

A similar organization affiliated with the European Union — Maritime Security Centre, Horn of Africa — provides 24-hour monitoring of merchant vessels passing near the Horn of Africa. ♦

Source: Combined Maritime Forces



Hashish seized by CTF 150



An Enemy of Terrorism



Pakistani Chief of Army Staff Qamar Javed Bajwa Leads His Nation Against Extremism

UNIPATH STAFF
PHOTOS BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A stark reminder hangs on the office wall of Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, Pakistan's chief of Army staff. The photos on display are those of children murdered by terrorists in Peshawar's Army Public School in December 2014.

Gen. Bajwa is determined not to forget. The Army he has commanded since late 2016 has recommitted itself to fighting violent extremism through well-publicized counterterrorism operations such as Zarb-e-Azb and Rudd-ul-Fasaad.

"The Pakistan Army is capable of meeting all internal and external challenges. It has achieved great successes to rid the country of violence and terrorism," the general recently told an audience at the military's Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate. "However, for enduring peace, each one of us has to contribute his respective bit."

Gen. Bajwa has served his country for 40 years. A native of Karachi, he began his military career as an infantryman with the Pakistan Army's famed Baloch Regiment and has risen through the ranks to hold several of the Army's top posts. He commanded the Army's 10th Corps, the country's largest, and was appointed commandant of the School of Infantry and Tactics in Quetta. His previous job was as inspector-general, training and evaluation, at the Army's General Headquarters in Rawalpindi.

Gen. Bajwa is no stranger to danger zones, both at home and abroad. He served as a brigade commander as part of the United Nations peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and led the Force Command Northern Areas with responsibility for the frequently tense Kashmir region.

As chief of Army staff, traditionally one of Pakistan's most influential offices, the general has

“The Pakistan Army is capable of meeting all internal and external challenges. It has achieved great successes to rid the country of violence and terrorism.” – Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa

been an uncompromising voice against terrorism. In a profile published in Pakistan, the general's sons said their father prioritizes the fight against extremism and terrorism. That steadfastness was reflected in the August 2017 speech at the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate.

“Every Pakistani is a Soldier of Operation Rudd-ul-Fasaad,” Gen. Bajwa told an audience consisting largely of youths. “Educated youth is a prime target of ISIS and affiliates. ... Be extra cautious.”

A terrorist attack on Karachi Airport in June 2014 led to Operation Zarb-e-Azb, focused mostly on the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas of northern Pakistan, where many extremist groups have been based. The bloodshed at Peshawar's Army Public School later that year solidified the Army's commitment to destroy terrorists plaguing Pakistan.

“He kept saying over and over, ‘This has to be the end. There must be consensus against terrorism; it is the biggest threat to Pakistan's existence,’” one of the general's sons said in an interview.

A result of the Peshawar tragedy was the activation of Operation Rudd-ul-Fasaad, which takes the counterterrorism fight to the Pakistani heartland of Punjab and relies more heavily on intelligence gathering within the cities to uproot terror cells. Gen. Bajwa has emphasized his goal that Rudd-ul-Fasaad will “bring lasting peace and stability” to Pakistan.

“Our resolve won't succumb to any challenge,” the general said.

Regional peace, including with neighboring Afghanistan, has also been a focus of the chief of Army staff. Following an attack on coalition troops in Afghanistan in August 2017, Gen. Bajwa took the extra step of condemning the violence over the border.

“We fully understand the loss and pain of victims' families as Pakistan is undergoing a similar trail of blood in the



Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, right, meets with U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis in December 2017.

fight against a common threat of terrorism,” the general said in a statement released by the Pakistan Army.

The general also earned praise for helping to improve relations with its western neighbor. On August 2, 2017, Gen. Bajwa hosted Afghan envoy Dr. Omar Zakhilwal at the Army's general headquarters to discuss security. In February 2018, he attended a multinational conference of defense chiefs in Kabul. These meetings were seen as first steps to greater cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

As the 16th general to lead Pakistan's Army since the founding of the nation in 1947, Gen. Bajwa earns high praise from military colleagues who view him as humble and sympathetic. His August 2017 visit to a Quetta military hospital to comfort Soldiers wounded in a terrorist attack only reinforced that impression. So did his recent visit to his old regiment to lay a wreath on a memorial to Soldiers who died for Pakistan.

As one of his former officers noted: “He is extremely professional, but very easy going and full of compassion.”

Sources: Dawn, Pakistan Post, Radio Pakistan, Newsweek Pakistan, Voice of America, Daily Pakistan



EGYPT PROMOTES COUNTERTERRORISM

UNIPATH STAFF

The Arab League adopted an Egyptian resolution to develop a pan-Arab counterterrorism system, according to an official statement from the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2017.

The resolution was approved just days after terrorists murdered 311 civilians at Friday prayers at Al-Rawdah mosque in North Sinai.

Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid said the resolution reinforces efforts to build consensus in support of Egypt's counterterrorism vision. In line with the view of the Egyptian government, the resolution called combating terrorism a fundamental human right.

The resolution called for implementing the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism signed in 1998. It criminalizes not just terrorists but those who support, incite and finance them.

The resolution also recommitted the Arab League to the United Nations Global Counterterrorism Strategy and Security Council resolutions to counter extremist narratives.

The goal, Abu Zeid said, was to ratify a world-wide agreement that provides a universal definition of terrorism that distinguishes it from legitimate armed resistance movements.



Egyptian troops train during a counterterrorism scenario at the Bright Star exercise in September 2017. EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE





Iraqis Celebrate Daesh's Destruction

UNIPATH STAFF

Iraqi Armed Forces and Syrian troops affiliated with the coalition symbolically linked hands on their mutual border in December 2017 to mark the final defeat of Daesh in Iraq.

The terrorist group once boasted more than 25,000 fighters in the region, but by the beginning of 2018 fewer than 3,000 remained, mostly in Syria. So thoroughly had Iraqi forces recaptured the territory once occupied by Daesh that Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared final victory December 10, 2017.

Nearly 8 million Iraqis and Syrians have been liberated from Daesh misrule since 2014. Cities freed included Ramadi, Mosul, Fallujah, Raqqa and Bayji.

“Your lands have been completely



Iraqi Armed Forces hold a victory parade over Daesh in December 2017 in Baghdad.

IRAQI MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

liberated, your occupied cities and towns are now safely back to the heart of our nation, and the dream of liberation is now a reality,” Prime Minister al-Abadi told his fellow citizens in the December victory speech.

Nevertheless, the Iraqi leader issued

words of caution lest poor governance, corruption and disunity spoil the accomplishments of the Iraqi Armed Forces. He called for an end to “sectarian and seditious language that was the primary cause of many humanitarian catastrophes.” Iraqi disunity allowed Daesh gangs to occupy and destroy Iraqi cities, causing suffering for millions of residents, he said.

“Despite the announcement of the final victory, we must remain vigilant, ready to thwart any attempt to terrorize our land and people,” Prime Minister al-Abadi said. “Terrorism is a constant threat, and our battle against it continues. The secret to our great victory was our unity and concord — we must guard them jealously.”

Qatar Rescues Terror Victims

UNIPATH STAFF

The Qatari Armed Forces helped rescue hundreds of victims of a massive terrorist attack in the Somali capital of Mogadishu in October 2017. Under orders from His Royal Highness Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, a Qatari medical and rescue team aboard a C-17 aircraft flew 2,700 kilometers to Somalia with first aid for victims of a terror bombing that overwhelmed Mogadishu's medical system.

Afterward, Qatar helped transport more than 100 wounded to hospitals in Khartoum, Sudan. The military mission included assistance from the Qatar International Search and Rescue Group and Hamad Medical Corporation.

In a further gesture of goodwill, Qatar's ambassador to Sudan, Rashid bin Abdulrahman Al Nuaimi, visited injured Somalis. The Qatari Embassy was assigned the task of monitoring the well-being of the patients.

A bomb-laden truck exploded in a commercial district in Mogadishu, killing nearly 300 and wounding hundreds more.

The disaster swamped the health system of a poor country that has experienced decades of civil war and remains vulnerable to assaults by the terrorist group al-Shabaab. In a multinational effort to help the bombing victims, Qatari forces were joined by those of the United States, Kenya and Turkey.

Sources: *The Peninsula*, *The New Arab*



Egyptians Promote Economic Security

UNIPATH STAFF

Egypt is planning to build the largest seawater desalination plant in the world in the Suez coastal city of Ain Sokhna. The project has a 300 million euro loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The plant will have the capacity to purify 164,000 cubic meters of seawater a day and will contribute to the economic revival of the Suez governate, said Kamal El-Wazeir, head of the Egyptian Armed Forces Engineering Authority.

Three other large desalination plants operate nearby in El Galala, and Egypt has constructed others in Marsa Matrouh farther west on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Suez Canal Economic Zone Chairman Mohab Mamish concluded the loan deal with the Europeans at the annual International Maritime Organisation meeting in London in December 2017. The European Bank is involved in 52 projects in Egypt with an investment total of 3 billion euros.

In the name of providing economic security for its people, Egypt has sponsored multiple economic development projects within its Suez Canal Economic Zone, including resorts, power stations and ports.

Sources: *Egypt Today*, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

This is one of many infrastructure projects Egypt has commissioned in Ain Sokhna on the Suez Canal. REUTERS

Discussing Yemen's Future

UNIPATH STAFF

Stability in Yemen was the focus of a meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, of regional foreign ministers and military chiefs in October 2017. Among the prominent voices urging a peaceful solution to the crisis in Yemen were those of Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi and Jordan Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Freihat. Safadi reiterated Jordan's support for multinational agreements regarding Yemen, including United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216 and the Gulf Initiative. He noted that the Arab Alliance was created to respond to a request from the legitimate government of Yemen. Jordanian security is linked to that of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the entire Arabian Gulf, the foreign minister said.

In addition to Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Pakistan, Djibouti, Sudan, Senegal, Morocco and Malaysia also took part in the meeting.

During the trip to Riyadh, Jordanian officials also discussed cooperating with Saudi Arabia on His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud's NEOM project, a proposed \$500 billion megacity powered by wind and solar energy. Jordanian Minister of State for Media Affairs Mohammad Momani said the project — to cover 26,000 square kilometers of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt — will improve the economic security of the region.

Sources: Petra news agency, *The Jordan Times*



Officers Share Cultures at International Night

UNIPATH STAFF

Coalition International Night is an annual event at United States Central Command (CENTCOM) that honors the dozens of nations that have contributed to the fight against global terrorism.

The November 30, 2017, event — the 13th International Night since 2005 — provided an opportunity for representatives from countries such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia to share photographs, clothing, foods, crafts and books from their home countries with visitors.

It also allowed officers from the Middle East, Europe, Australia, the Americas and Central, South and East Asia to share their cultures with U.S. leaders such as CENTCOM Commander Gen. Joseph Votel at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida.

Saudi Arabia's senior representative to CENTCOM headquarters, Brig. Gen. Fawaz al-Fawaz, praised the opportunity not only to exhibit Saudi culture but also to present details of his country's 2030 strategic vision. The plan includes initiatives to diversify the country's economy, increase the role of women in



Saudi Brig. Gen. Fawaz al-Fawaz, left, talks with CENTCOM Commander Gen. Joseph Votel.

SAUDI ARMED FORCES

society and improve military preparedness.

"This great event hosted and organized every year by CENTCOM brings the whole world under one roof, giving visitors the opportunity to travel around the globe in a of couple hours to explore and learn more about different cultures," Brig. Gen. Fawaz said.

Qatari defense attaché Staff Brig. Gen. Yusuf bin

Mohammed Al-Kuwari was among some of the many guests of honor at the event, joined by his fellow officers and Qatari students living in Florida.

Brig. Gen. Engineer Yousef Al-Maliki made a short introduction about Qatar's past and present, after which the Qatari pavilion served tea, coffee and dates at a display that included pictures of Qatar's 2022 World Cup stadiums under construction and a description of the country's economic development plan called the Qatar 2030 Vision.

"The pavilion attracted a large number of visitors, dignitaries and CENTCOM senior officers," Brig. Gen. Al-Maliki noted.



The Qatari delegation to CENTCOM hosts Gen. Votel.

QATAR ARMED FORCES



Senior national representatives to CENTCOM from Yemen, left, and Jordan, right, join a representative from Saudi Arabia's liaison office at CENTCOM during international night.

CENTCOM



ENHANCING CYBER SECURITY IN OMAN

UNIPATH STAFF

Improving Oman's response to cyber attacks was the goal of the country's fourth National Cyber Security Drill, which involved 34 government agencies. Millions of attacks target Oman's networks annually. The three-day drill, held in October 2017 by Oman's Information Technology Authority (ITA) through its Computer Emergency Response Team (OCERT), tested the readiness of governmental institutions to fend off such attacks. It also enhanced coordination between OCERT and the private sector.

OCERT head Eng Bader Ali al Salhi noted that Oman had investigated more than 1,800 security incidents through the first 10 months of 2017. It has also issued hundreds of notifications to public and private entities to beware of cyber intrusions.

"ITA's role is not limited to handling cyber incidents when they occur," al Salhi said. "It goes beyond that by taking proactive precautionary procedures to avoid such incidents and mitigating their risks if they occur. "We urge all entities to follow up and adopt all cyber security policies and frameworks released by ITA and to benefit from information security warnings and notifications on cyber security threats and vulnerabilities."

The OCERT drill focused mostly on analyzing incidents related to data leakage, hacking and other events involving the loss of information.

Speaking at the Annual Regional Cybersecurity Summit in Muscat in late 2017, Omani ITA Chief Executive Officer Salim al Ruzaiqi praised his country's high cyber-security ranking as compiled by the United Nations' International Telecommunication Union.

"We are proud that Oman is ranked first among Arab countries and fourth globally," he said.

Source: muscatdaily.com

Kyrgyzstan Secures Power Stations

UNIPATH STAFF

Kyrgyzstan and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) are partnering to protect some of the country's biggest strategic assets: its hydroelectric dams and power stations. The OSCE Programme Office has donated video surveillance equipment to the National Guard of the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan to enhance the Tash-Kuymr and Kurpsai power stations. Two other large hydroelectric stations in the country, Shamaldysai and Uch-Korgon, received security cameras several years ago.

"Improving operational readiness and the protection of critical energy facilities is one of the key objectives of the country," said Almazbek Karasartov, commander of the Kyrgyzstan National Guard.

The installation of security equipment is part of a larger effort to strengthen the Central Asian country's counterterrorism capacity.

"The Programme Office continuously supports the National Guard of Kyrgyzstan in its efforts to enhance the security of strategic facilities, which can become a possible target for criminals," said Valeriu Chiveri, deputy head of the OSCE Programme Office. "Moreover, we closely co-operate on the prevention and effective management of emergency situations." Source: OSCE



Kyrgyz workers install a turbine at a hydroelectric plant, part of a network of power plants getting increased protection in the country. REUTERS



Tajikistan's President Visits Jordan



UNIPATH STAFF

His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein of Jordan and Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon met in Amman to discuss improving relations and increasing security between the two nations. The December 2017 talks led to agreements in the fields of economics, trade, science, technology, tourism, culture and agriculture. One outcome will be the formation of a joint Jordanian-Tajikistani business council.

The talks were followed by a communiqué in which the two countries announced plans to bolster cooperation

by creating a Jordanian-Tajikistani parliamentary friendship committee and boosting political relations by coordinating their foreign affairs ministries and embassies.

President Rahmon, who toured famous Jordanian sites such as the ancient city of Petra, praised his host country for maintaining stability and security in a region beset by conflict. "I am proud of Jordan for its security, wise leadership and moderate policy, a model for the Muslim world," President Rahmon said. Sources: Petra news agency, *The Jordan Times*

Lebanon Upgrades AIR POWER



UNIPATH STAFF

The Lebanese Army has received its first allotment of two A-29 Super Tucano light combat aircraft from the United States.

The arrival of the aircraft boosts Lebanon's ability to fight terrorists, defend its borders, conduct reconnaissance and support ground troops. The planes are equipped with machine guns and can be adapted to fire laser-guided missiles.

The two aircraft, flown by pilots trained in the U.S., are the first of six Super Tucanos promised in 2018. The aircraft has served successfully in tumultuous regions such as Afghanistan, whose hilly terrain and hot summers duplicate those of Lebanon.

The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)

operate just a handful of fixed-wing aircraft, all of which suffer from heavy use.

The new aircraft will provide a "qualitative leap in improving the aerial capabilities of the LAF," Lebanese Armed Forces Commander Gen. Joseph Aoun said in October 2017.

U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Elizabeth Richard praised the acquisition as a means to help build regional stability.

"The significant increase in LAF combat capability that this aircraft represents will ensure that the LAF will remain a national unifying force, a bulwark against extremism and terrorism," she said.

Sources: Reuters, *Al Hayat* (Lebanon)



ETHAN WAGNER/U.S. AIR FORCE



His Majesty King Hamad
bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain

REUTERS

Seeking Unity in Manama

UNIPATH STAFF

Discussion of current events — including the victory over Daesh in Iraq and the civil war in Yemen — occupied the attention of regional leaders meeting in Bahrain in December 2017 for the 13th edition of the Manama Dialogue.

The annual security summit attracted leaders from 20 countries to address topics such as counterterrorism; conflict resolution in Syria, Yemen and Iraq; the security implications of economic reform; and political and military responses to extremism.

Dr. Anwar Mohammad Gargash, the United Arab Emirates' minister of state for foreign affairs and international cooperation, stressed that Arab states can no longer be passive observers in their own security. Too often, this passive

Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, and Iraqi Foreign Minister Dr. Ibrahim al-Jaafari.

Dr. Al-Jaafari lauded his nation's achievements in purging Daesh from Iraq, an accomplishment for which Prince Turki praised the Iraqi Armed Forces. Still, Prince Turki raised concerns about the prospect of Iran promoting disunity in Iraq through militias more subservient to Tehran than Baghdad. In response, Dr. Al-Jaafari stressed his Arab and Iraqi identity.

Oman's representative to the conference, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focused on peaceful economic and cultural exchanges between the Arabian Gulf states and South and Southeast Asia.

Other participants included Yemeni Vice President Lt. General Ali Mohsin Al Ahmar, Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi, Gen. Zubair Mahmood Hayat of Pakistan and U.S. Central Command Commander Gen. Joseph Votel.

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain welcomed senior participants of the Manama Dialogue 2017 with a request for greater cooperation in the region to solve security problems.

"This is a difficult chapter in the history of the Arabian Gulf. We are facing multiple threats, but I believe they are more than matched by our resolve to overcome them," King Hamad said. Sources: Bahrain News Agency, *Asharq al-Awsat*, *The National*

"This is a difficult chapter in the history of the Arabian Gulf. We are facing multiple threats, but I believe they are more than matched by our resolve to overcome them."

~ His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain

approach has let neighboring states such as Iran and Turkey play an oversize role in Middle Eastern affairs.

"We have to be part of the countries that actually carry the burden. We cannot any longer be financiers for our security, but we have to be at the forefront," Dr. Gargash said.

A debate over post-conflict scenarios in Iraq engaged His Royal Highness Saudi Prince Turki al-Faisal, head of the King



Uzbekistan Partners with Afghanistan

UNIPATH STAFF

Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev committed his country to better military and economic relations with Afghanistan during a December 2017 visit by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. The countries reached agreements on trade, education, health care, and the formation of a joint commission to boost security along the Uzbek-Afghan border. The issues of terrorism, extremism and narcotics trafficking were also on the presidential agenda at the meeting in Tashkent.

Deals also included construction of a new electrical transmission line from Uzbekistan to Afghanistan and construction of a rail line between the Afghan cities of Herat and Mazar-e Sharif. President Mirziyoyev reiterated his country's support for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

"Tashkent strongly values cooperation with Afghanistan in all spheres, including economic and security ties. Cooperation agreements signed between the two nations are worth millions of dollars," the Uzbek president said.

President Ghani thanked the Uzbek leader for promoting regional cooperation.

"Afghanistan supports Uzbekistan's position adopted at the U.N., which is highlighted in President Donald Trump's new strategy," Ghani said. "The government and people of Afghanistan want Uzbekistan as a trading partner, which would be for the benefit of both countries."

Among the discussions between the two leaders was a plan to jointly police the Afghanistan-Uzbekistan Friendship Bridge over the Amu Darya river in the town of Hairatan, Afghanistan. Uzbekistan's leaders have recently become vociferous in their ambitions to improve relations with their geographical neighbors. In an address to the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2017, President Mirziyoyev set the new tone.

"A peaceful and economically prosperous Central Asia is our most important goal and key task," Uzbekistan's leader said.

Sources: TOLO News, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty



UAE Boosts Combat Readiness

UNIPATH STAFF

In yet another effort to improve combat readiness of its Armed Forces, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) hosted the Iron Union 5 military exercise with U.S. partners at the Al Hamra Training Center. Maj. Gen. Saleh al-Amiri, commander of UAE ground forces, lauded such joint exercises as a way to raise the performance and efficiency of the Armed Forces to defend the Arabian Gulf nations from potential threats.

Such exercises also provide opportunities for the UAE to build better relationships and overcome cultural and language barriers with the armed forces of friendly countries such as the United States.

Iron Union 5 ran for two weeks in September 2017, beginning with classroom instruction meant to reduce possible points of friction between

forces from the UAE and the U.S. Third Army. Training focused on three collective tasks: Conducting a quick attack, conducting a hasty defense and breaching battlefield obstacles.

According to U.S. Capt. Phil Baki, a company commander at the exercise, breaching the obstacles was the most challenging part of the training event.

"A breach requires a lot of timing and coordination between all the elements. If a single thing is off, it could cause a failure to the mission," the captain said. "The breach is challenging enough on its own, but throw in the language barrier and working across two different radio platforms, and it adds a whole different element."

The climax of the exercise was a live-fire demonstration involving the coordinated use of mechanized ground forces, fighter jets and helicopters.

Sources: Asharq al-Awsat, Nation Shield, U.S. Army

Soldiers from the United Arab Emirates and the United States work in a combined tactical command post at Iron Union 5 in the United Arab Emirates in September 2017.

CAPT. SCOTT KUHN/U.S. ARMY



KAZAKHSTAN Defends Caspian Sea

UNIPATH STAFF

Kazakhstan is taking the fight against terrorism to the Caspian Sea, opening a coastal naval headquarters that will coordinate and conduct military operations against potential threats to shipping and oil and gas installations.

"To date, all headquarters that operate in the state cover only the terrestrial territory. We do not have staffs on the sea side. Therefore, legislatively, we want to consolidate the possibility of carrying out anti-terrorist measures at sea," said Daulet Yergozhin, deputy chairman of the National Security Committee, which approved the new naval headquarters.

The headquarters' responsibilities will include protecting offshore platforms and seagoing ships and suppressing terrorist activity in the coastal regions. In September 2017, Yergozhin presented plans for the headquarters with the aim of making it operational as early as 2018.

"As of today, such work is completely done by the National Security Committee's Border Service. If necessary, we interact with other law enforcement agencies, as well as with the Armed Forces. But considering that the threat of a terrorist attack in the world, as you can see, is growing, we need to create the appropriate headquarters to strengthen coordination," he said.

The Caspian is economically vital not just for its shipping lanes and fisheries, but its mineral wealth.

"We have many offshore deposits such as Kashagan [oil field] and artificial islands. Gas and oil are produced under conditions of high temperatures and great pressure," Yergozhin said. "These are so-called terrorist vulnerable objects, and we must protect them." *Source: The Nation*

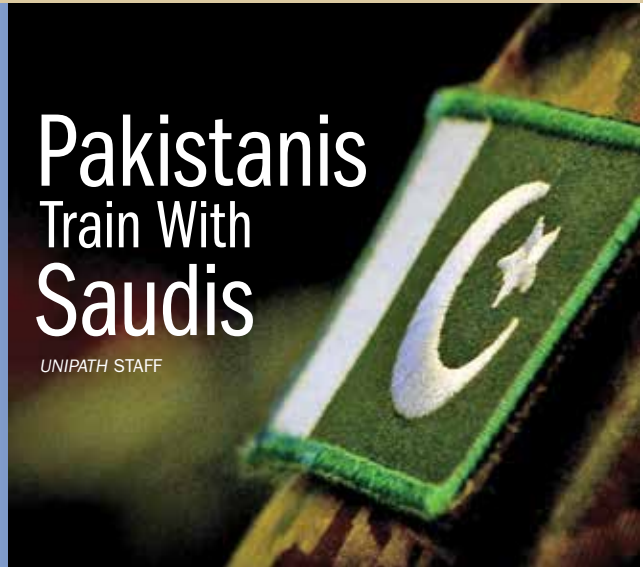


Kazakhstan wants to protect its Caspian Sea infrastructure, such as this Kashagan oil rig, from terror attacks.

REUTERS

Pakistanis Train With Saudis

UNIPATH STAFF



The Saudi Royal Land Forces and the Pakistan Army conducted three weeks of training in October 2017 called Al-Samsam 6. The exercise featured live ammunition, aerial assaults, dealing with improvised explosive devices, ambushes, raids and combat patrols.

"The drills were characterized by seriousness and integration, in command and control, standardization of common military concepts and terminology and implementation of professional training," said Saudi Brig. Gen. Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Buqmmi, commanding officer of the exercise.

The Saudi Press Agency noted the harmonious integration of the two countries' forces and their ability to hit targets with precision.

The concluding drill in the exercise occurred in the presence of the commanding officer of the 30th Corps Pakistan Army Lt. Gen. Akram Al Haq, Deputy Commander of Saudi Royal Land Forces Maj. Gen. Ahmed Al-Shihri and other senior officers from both countries.

Maj. Gen. Al-Shihri thanked the Pakistani government and Army for the successful opportunity to train together.

Simultaneously with Al-Samsam, the air forces of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey drilled together. The concluding ceremony was attended by Pakistani Chief of Army Staff Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa and Saudi Air Forces Operations Chief Maj. Gen. Khaled Al-Shablan.

Source: Sauress, the Saudi news agency



KUWAIT, U.S. BUILD MILITARY COOPERATION

UNIPATH STAFF

Kuwait hosted visits by U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis and U.S. Central Command Commander Gen. Joseph Votel in December 2017 amid continued cooperation between U.S. and Kuwaiti military units on the ground.

Mattis, who met with Emir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al Hamad Al Sabah, praised the role Kuwait has played since its liberation in 1991.

“It’s a very open, transparent, honest relationship,” the U.S. defense secretary said. “They’ll tell you what they think right up front about any issue if asked, and we do ask them. Routinely, I’ll go to them for advice.”

A visit by Gen. Votel a few days later included discussions with Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lt. Gen. Mohammad Khaled Al-Khadher. Defense cooperation was on the agenda.

Meanwhile, forces from both countries spent much of the fall of 2017 engaged in joint training. Kuwait sent 34 military

police and 14 members of the Amiri Guard to train with U.S. counterparts for five weeks through October 30.

Soldiers improved skills such as controlling riots, applying first aid, operating convoys and detaining suspects.

During the same period, U.S. Army troops and Kuwaiti Land Forces shared operational methods and enhanced interoperability during artillery training in the desert. One of the highlights was a demonstration of the firepower of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS).

HIMARS consists of anti-personnel rocket batteries mounted on heavy trucks for extra mobility.

“This was my first opportunity to view the HIMARS. I was impressed by the teamwork, smooth flow, and coordination between the tent and launcher,” said Kuwaiti Col. Salem A. Al-Hosenan, commander of the 23rd Multi-Launch Rocket System field artillery battalion. “This crew operates with safety in mind.”



Members of a U.S. artillery battalion conduct a HIMARS demonstration for Kuwaiti peers.

SGT. AARON ELLERMAN/U.S. ARMY

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