

**Jordan Holds
Eager Lion Exercise**

**Central Asia
Aids Afghanistan**

**Middle East Focuses
on Cyber Defense**

UNIPATH



**BUILDING
PEACE**



The Pakistan Monument in Islamabad is also a heritage museum. Built to symbolize the unity of the Pakistani people, the monument is visible from across the Islamabad-Rawalpindi metropolitan area and is a popular tourist destination. ISTOCK





**Afghan pigeon fancier
Abdul Ghani feeds his
pigeons on the rooftop of
his home in Herat province.**

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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ON THE COVER:

Iraqi children celebrate on March 14, 2018, at the Nineveh Bridge, previously known as Mosul's Old Bridge, following its reconstruction.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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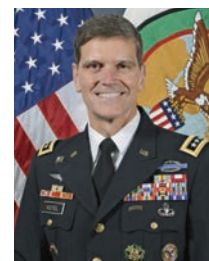
Pivoting Toward Peace

Volume 8, Number 4



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KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE

I would like to thank our friends at U.S. Central Command for inviting me to write the opening article of this edition of *Unipath*, which focuses on the theme of “pivoting toward peace.” The experiences of security forces in the kingdom of Bahrain in this area encouraged me to write.

Over the past two decades, the region has witnessed civil wars, riots and violent public rallies. They have created security vacuums exploited by terrorist organizations that have found fertile ground to grow and become threats to world peace. Terrorist bombings have encompassed the world, and the blood of innocents has been shed everywhere. Extremist groups use social networking pages to disseminate exclusionist ideas and to deceive young people and engage them in terrorist operations.

At the same time, some countries in the region have exploited these events to destabilize security and stability by provoking sectarian strife and supporting terrorist groups within neighboring countries. They do this to spread chaos, weaken security and control state organs. The kingdom of Bahrain was the target of such a malicious agenda. We had to confront this danger and were able to defeat aggression, dismantle terrorist networks and extend security in the kingdom. Members of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), Ministry of Interior and National Guard served a heroic role in preserving innocent lives and protecting infrastructure during security operations and arrests of saboteurs.

In Yemen, without a doubt, the biggest challenge is to restore security and stability and to prevent terrorist groups from returning and finding sanctuaries within society. Security forces play a large role in humanitarian and professional dealings with the population and instructing citizens in the necessity of reporting the activities of extremist groups. The Royal Guard and the task forces from BDF have helped citizens to open roads and restore services. Working with other state institutions, the forces have reopened health centers, schools and government offices. We have aided orphans — one of the priorities of the kingdom of Bahrain through programs of the Royal Charity Foundation. I personally have overseen many of these missions.

Within a short period, we were able to move toward stability and prosperity and began to work to preserve achievements through intelligence work and exchange of information with friendly countries. Terrorist groups have networks of promoters and financiers in neighboring countries, so they cannot be dismantled without the exchange of intelligence and tracking of the terrorists. It is necessary to work with partners and brothers to strike at the horrors of

terrorism in areas that suffer from a security vacuum before violent extremists can tamper with the security of the region.

We have joined with our brothers in the Arab Alliance to support Yemen. This noble mission has yielded great results by restoring legitimacy and stability to the region. Three years ago, Yemen was a haven for al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and criminal militias. Today, thanks to the efforts of the Arab Alliance, we have extended security to most areas of Yemen and expelled terrorists. We have begun to see a significant

improvement in Yemeni security and remain committed to working with our brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Yemeni government to build lasting peace.

The mission was not only militarily successful, but the Arab coalition reconstructed areas devastated by terrorism and helped affected civilians, building hospitals and schools and supporting civil society organizations. It also worked with competent authorities to immunize young people against extremist ideas and focused on preparing teachers to build a tolerant generation that rejects extremism and violence. Imams have been empowered to urge nonvio-

lence and spread the spirit of tolerance between religions, and the coalition has encouraged a culture of citizenship and loyalty to the homeland without adopting agendas that try to break national unity through sectarian incitement.

We work with international partners to develop the capabilities of our Armed Forces and to participate in international exercises that increase expertise in all fields. Here I would like to thank our brothers in the GCC for their continued support in the military and security fields to maintain regional stability. I thank our friends in the United States for cooperating with the states of the region to protect international shipping and to work continuously in the fight against terrorism.

One of the most important means of maintaining peace is training and preparing for security threats. So we in the kingdom of Bahrain advocate exercises that simulate reality to evaluate the speed of response and the abilities of the security services. In late 2017, The Kingdom Guardian 1 exercise at the Seef shopping complex was praised by observers from friendly countries as an example of superior coordination. Not only did the exercise encourage high performance from security services, but we focused on respecting human rights in dealing with suspects. We are keen to participate in regional exercises with our GCC brothers and international exercises with our international partners.

His Highness Brig. Gen. Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Bahrain Royal Guard Commander





MASTER SGT. JOSHUA L. DEMOTTS/U.S. AIR FORCE



PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS SANDI GRIMNES MORENO/U.S. NAVY

PERFECTING A PARTNERSHIP

JORDANIAN AND U.S. TROOPS COMPLETE THE 8TH ANNUAL EAGER LION MILITARY EXERCISE

UNIPATH STAFF



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MASTER SGT. JOSHUA L. DEMOTTS/U.S. AIR FORCE



MASTER SGT. JOSHUA L. DEMOTTS/U.S. AIR FORCE

Downpours the night before had left the normally dry desert floor laced with muddy trenches. Asked to repel enemy forces trying to slip across the border, Jordanian and U.S. Soldiers converted the trenches into defensive positions.

Troops from the Jordanian border guards and the California U.S. Army National Guard, their ankles and knees immersed in the remains of the rains, engaged in a muddy bout of mortaring and machine gunning.

They were using real ammunition and — combined with firepower from U.S. and Jordanian tanks, artillery and armored cars — provided an explosive climax to Eager Lion 2018.

The military exercise stretched across Jordan, engaging more than 7,300 troops from the two countries. The April 15-27, 2018, exercise — the eighth in a series — was bilateral, but Jordanian leadership has invited more than 40 countries for Eager Lion 2019.

“Right now we fully understand how our friends the Americans work, and they understand how we work,” said Jordanian Exercise Director Brig. Gen. Mohammed Al-Thalji. “That helps us in many aspects to integrate with each other and unify our efforts to achieve our goals and objectives.”

The missions at Eager Lion were designed so that ground, naval and air forces could respond to conventional and unconventional threats using realistic scenarios within a coalition environment.

Soldiers stormed terrorist-occupied villages, evacuated an embassy and rescued passengers from ships in the Gulf of Aqaba.

They responded to a chemical attack, scattered propaganda leaflets over an occupied village and suppressed riots in a displaced persons camp.

“We are trying to come up with scenarios that simulate reality,” Brig. Gen. Thalji said. “Jordan is an oasis of security and stability in a region where the fires are surrounding and encircling Jordan from almost all sides.”

The U.S. Marine Corps had a large presence at Eager Lion 2018. When Marines weren’t taking target practice with the 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion in the wilds of southern Jordan, they were flying helicopters over the Aqaba waterfront or donning hazardous material suits for chemical attack training.

At the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center near Amman, Marines evacuated staffers from a fictional embassy enveloped by angry, chanting protestors. Wearing street clothes and holding signs, Jordan Armed Forces Soldiers portrayed the rioters.

Whisked out the embassy door and loaded aboard buses for a flight to an airfield, the diplomats climbed into the backs of MV-22 Ospray aircraft and were flown to safety.

“Exercises like Eager Lion are ideal ways to prepare our forces to operate together in uncertain and dangerous conditions,” said U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Jon Mott, U.S. Central Command’s director of exercises and training and co-director of the exercise.

Although the exercise was bilateral, a senior leader seminar tied to Eager Lion attracted generals from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other countries.

Leaders shared ideas and experiences about foreign fighters, controlling ungoverned spaces and the latest developments in unmanned aerial vehicle technology.

When shown maps suggesting ungoverned regions in the Middle East and South Asia, national representatives were quick to emphasize that instability occurred only in small pockets of their countries.

But Jordanian Brig. Gen. Azzam Rwahneh, who made a presentation at the seminar, said

Troops with the Jordanian border guards and the California U.S. Army National Guard defend a border against “enemy infiltrators” during a live-fire display at Eager Lion.

MASTER SGT. JOSHUA L. DEMOTTS/
U.S. AIR FORCE



An MH-60S carrying members of the U.S. Navy's Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 28 raises a rescue litter while practicing casualty evacuation procedures with a patrol boat from the Royal Jordanian Navy during exercise Eager Lion 2018.

PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS SANDI GRIMNES MORENO/U.S. NAVY



JORDANIAN AND U.S. COMMANDERS PRAISED EAGER LION 2018 AS A TESTAMENT TO SEVEN DECADES OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES.



Members of the 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion scan the terrain for enemy troops during training.

LANCE CPL. TOJYEA MATALLY/U.S. MARINE CORPS



military operations were just one component of ensuring national stability. Also important were good governance, societal justice, anti-corruption efforts and the rule of law.

“No single state can counter this kind of threat itself,” he said.

Gen. Mott declared that the region offered no quick and easy victories and called upon coalition forces to learn and evolve to defeat regional threats.

“We must prevail when called upon to protect our people. The surest way of accomplishing this is working together as partners,” Gen. Mott told seminar attendees.

Jordan’s isolated — but not ungoverned — deserts were the setting for several training events.

In one “mass casualty” simulation near Queirah, an improvised explosive device injured six Soldiers. Jordanian ambulances sped the “wounded” to U.S. military medical tents, including a mobile operating room.

“It’s been an excellent experience, both serving the Marines and also working with the Jordanians,” said Cmdr. Alan Flanigan of the Shock Trauma Platoon, a U.S. Navy unit that assisted in the exercise.

Farther north near Amman, two Jordanian infantry companies with the Princess Basma Army rushed from building to building to clear a simulated village stuck in the desert. American trainers were on hand to assist.

“It’s a unique opportunity for our Soldiers to come over to their country and be exposed to how they do things as well as their way of life,” U.S. Army 1st Lt. Luke Prolx said after watching his Jordanian partners perform the drills.

Amid the crack of rifles and the roar of engines, Eager Lion, as it has evolved since the

early days of 2011, is placing greater emphasis on defending against nonmilitary threats like cyber attacks, ideological warfare and terrorist propaganda.

Jordan Armed Forces imams and U.S. military chaplains held several events together, including a reception at the Prince Hassan College for Islamic Studies in Zarqa.

Here Jordan’s religious leaders train military clergy to advocate an Islam untainted by violent extremism and aligned with His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein’s Amman Message.

“Our efforts evolved into anti-extremist training courses about a year ago. These courses contain materials that study the problem and provide aspects of persuasion and evidence,” said Brig. Gen. Dr. Ibraheem Abu Aqab, dean of Prince Hassan College.

“We are not limited to describing the phenomenon of extremism, but we identify the disease and medicine by correcting religious concepts that extremists use because of their misunderstandings.”

Jordanian and U.S. commanders praised Eager Lion 2018 as a testament to seven decades of friendship between the countries. The 2019 version of Eager Lion, scheduled for late August and early September, should be more complex with the inclusion of potentially dozens of other countries.

“We are very pleased with the exercise results. We in the Jordan Armed Forces benefit from the teamwork in the planning and execution,” said Brig. Gen. Azzam, the officer in charge of the command center that issued orders to thousands of Eager Lion participants. “I would like to express my gratitude to our partners in the U.S. forces.”

Jordanian and U.S. Marines practice riot control.

PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS SANDI GRIMNES MORENO/U.S. NAVY

Jordan Armed Forces Brig. Staff Gen. Mohammed Al-Thalji, right, and U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Jon Mott attend a news conference at the start of Eager Lion 2018.

SGT. 1ST CLASS WHITNEY HUGHES/U.S. ARMY

A HUMANE MISSION

JORDANIAN AND U.S. TROOPS DISPENSE GIFTS AND GOODWILL AT AN AMMAN ORPHANAGE

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY SGT. 1ST CLASS WHITNEY HUGHES/U.S. ARMY

A combined force of 30 uniformed U.S. and Jordan Armed Forces Soldiers were recruited for a unique mission at Eager Lion 2018. The projectiles they used were nothing more lethal than soccer balls, and target practice entailed the use of goalies and nets.

This humanitarian visit to a Jordanian orphanage, arranged by Jordan's military imams and their counterparts among U.S. military chaplains, was a first for Eager Lion in its eight-year history.

Although the visit offered parallels to fictional scenarios in the military exercise dealing with displaced people, the main motivation was to bring joy to young orphans traditionally treated as outcasts in society.

SOS Children's Village Amman provides a measure of home life for 40 abandoned and parentless children ages 2 to 17. Young adults make up another 14 of the residents.

When the village was established in 1983, the Jordanian government provided the land in a wooded,

hilly district of Amman away from the urban bustle of the nation's capital. The buildings and grounds provide a pleasing environment of shade trees and well-groomed flower beds.

Here the children study, tend the gardens, play sports and operate computers under the watchful eyes of "house mothers" who live on-site and serve as substitute parents.

Since the children are severed from family and tribal affiliation — key identifiers in Jordanian society — the village gives them new names and identities. Reintegrating into society isn't easy for the orphans when they reach adulthood, but the village aims to make that transition easier.

Under a cool, cloudless sky, American and Jordanian Soldiers joined 25 children on a playground, dribbling and kicking soccer balls. Five kids tried to score on an American goalie who laughed as multiple balls pummeled his body.

"I'm getting tired, man!" he said after 10 minutes of this treatment.

A female American Soldier flipped a little girl upside down and tickled her stomach. Other troops offered high-fives and fist bumps to the children.

The two-hour visit ended with a presentation of gifts — the children received soccer balls from the Americans and wristwatches from the Jordanians.

Maj. Pinkie Fischer, a U.S. Army chaplain, said the visit was a success on several levels: U.S. and Jordanian religious affairs teams strengthened friendships, reinforced the objectives of their military commanders at Eager Lion and established a precedent for helping the needy at future exercises.

"Hopefully it initiated a new annual mission that will be a part of the Eager Lion exercise," Maj. Fischer said.

SOS Children's Villages also operate in Aqaba in southern Jordan and Irbid in northern Jordan.

Dr. Khamis Sirhan, a Jordanian military imam who watched the lively interaction among Soldiers and children, summarized the military mission to the orphanage: "It's a delegation of peace."



A resident of SOS Children's Village Amman shoots at a goal defended by a U.S. Soldier. The visit was arranged by Jordan Armed Forces imams as part of Eager Lion 2018.



A U.S. Soldier plays with a boy at SOS Children's Village Amman.



INFORMATION OPERATIONS

JORDANIAN TROOPS COMMUNICATE WITH NONCOMBATANTS THROUGH LEAFLETS, CELLPHONES AND LOUDSPEAKERS

LT. MOHAMMAD ALKHAWLDA, JORDAN ARMED FORCES

As part of the Eager Lion 2018 exercise, the Directorate of Morale Guidance for the Jordanian Armed Forces-Arab Army conducted a scenario dealing with terrorist cells near residential areas, with the directorate working to gain the residents' trust by communicating with them through all modern means and technologies.

The directorate worked side by side with its American counterparts to conduct a joint exercise of dropping leaflets on an area under enemy control to inform them of the imminent execution of an airstrike on enemy positions.

The C-130 came in low over the desert, its engines droning loudly, and dropped a shimmering cloud of leaflets to blanket the area.

The text of the leaflets read: "Dear citizens, Coalition forces will bombard the terrorist groups so that you can enjoy security and safety. Please move away from the terrorists' locations and assemblies, and please contact us to identify the terrorists' locations."

While the leaflets were dropped, loudspeakers from

the front lines began calling on citizens to move away from terrorist positions and to dial a phone number to reach coalition forces. At the same time, mobile phone owners in the area of operations received a text message.

It was a highly skilled and accurate operation. All details were executed successfully, demonstrating the efficiency and professionalism of the training course.

Eager Lion provides a genuine opportunity to learn, exchange military expertise and standardize concepts among all participants. Training is carried out in several stages, in which the participants' efforts are combined, duties are distributed, and all branches cooperate to work under conditions and challenges similar to those of real operations, contributing to building the participants' skills.

The nature of my work in Eager Lion as an operations and information officer allows me to operate side by side with friendly forces in planning and preparing information operations. We analyze the target audience, creating the products and using the appropriate means to achieve the desired effect.

On the margins of preparations for Eager Lion 2018, I also participated as a trainer in a workshop titled “The Impact of Military Information Operations on Target Audiences,” held by the directorate two weeks before the launch of Eager Lion. Officers and noncommissioned officers from various branches of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army participated, in cooperation with American forces.

The workshop was aimed at enabling capable individuals to deal with information operations, adapt to the atmosphere of an operations scenario, and work with friendly forces in the same field. They were trained in the best use of equipment and special tasks for information operations, coordination and standardizing concepts among various agencies.

The course covered several topics, including analyzing the target audience, preparing information for the operations arena, military decision-making processes, selecting means of persuasion and the appropriate media, and methods of communication and the use of technology. Also included was training to drop leaflets, which was done as part of Eager Lion for the first time in cooperation with the Royal Jordanian Air Force.

We had two teams, ground and air. The air team’s task was to drop the leaflets from the plane and coordinate with air traffic control to determine the location of the drop. The team was trained on how to drop the leaflets to ensure wide distribution over the target area. The leaflets were dropped half an hour before the airstrikes began. The Air Force made precise calculations based on the plane’s altitude and the wind speed and direction to make sure leaflets fell in the target area.

In addition, 55,000 leaflets were prepared in dedicated boxes with holes in their sides to affect a proper release and distribution. The boxes were connected to a static line like that used by paratroopers to ensure that the leaflets fell in the designated area.

The air team consists of five people, including a photographer to document the drop. The ground team, consisting of six people, is assigned to set up loudspeakers in the target area and use text messaging to communicate with residents in the target area under enemy control.

Sgt. Omar Jamil al-Kharabsheh of the leaflet drop team said: “Military training in information operations with American forces during Eager Lion 2018 is an important domain for interacting with our partners to exchange expertise and experiences and build the capabilities of individuals and ranks in the Jordan Armed Forces. The friendly American forces are considered the strongest in the world in various military fields, especially in the field of information operations and psychological operations with respect to information’s importance for the military. Various exercises have been conducted in this area, which complements field operations. Considering current



Jordan Armed Forces personnel drop leaflets from the back of a C-130 aircraft during Eager Lion 2018. JORDAN ARMED FORCES

circumstances affecting the region, which is undergoing diverse, rapid changes, the exercise was realistic in addressing the variables in the region.”

All participants were trained in the writing, design and preparation of the leaflets, as well as the use of loudspeakers and the Pulse app to send messages to mobile phones in the target area. This training was a continuation of initial training the same team received last year.

Sgt. 1st Class Qais Al-Assaf, commenting on the experience he gained from learning to use Pulse to send short messages to mobile phones, said:

“As for the topic of the training, it clearly and honestly reflects the attacks by terrorist groups on most countries and the aggression and persecution that countries are subjected to by those terrorist groups. I believe that what we trained on during the exercise must be put into practice and utilized in military operations. The most important training that was implemented during the exercise, which I hope will be utilized and applied, is the method of communicating with residents by delivering important information to the population of an isolated region, where it’s very difficult to communicate with them, and deliver information to them clearly and safely by dropping paper leaflets from above the region containing the information to be delivered to the region’s residents. Information has been delivered this way to the largest possible number of residents in a short period of time.”

In short, Eager Lion is an important and strategic part of the relationship between the Jordanian and American armies. It is an opportunity for the two countries to train and stay ready by working together to ensure the ability to operate in various critical and dangerous circumstances. ♦

A photograph of children playing with a blue ball in front of a mud-brick wall. The scene is set outdoors under a clear blue sky. A large, textured mud-brick wall forms the background. In the foreground, several children are visible. One child in the center is running towards the right, looking up at a blue ball suspended in the air. To the left, another child is partially visible, also looking up. In the background, two more children are sitting on the ground against the wall. The overall atmosphere is one of play and hope in a modest setting.

SECURITY

Through Good Government

**The Afghan Government Must Improve Public Services
to Gain the Loyalty of Citizens**

AHMAD FARID FAROZI

FORMER DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS, DEMOCRACY INTERNATIONAL, AFGHANISTAN

Empirical evidence has shown positive correlations between the quality and efficiency of public service delivery and the level of trust citizens have in their government. For a fragile country such as Afghanistan, where nonstate actors in remote areas compete with the government, the legitimacy of the state essentially depends on the citizens' trust and confidence.

For rural Afghans, where anti-government elements can exert direct influence, the quality and efficiency of public institutions are what matter most.

Therefore, regardless of whether the service provider is a local warlord, an anti-government group or the local government, each realizes it needs to offer better public services to win the hearts and minds of the people.

Evaluating the quality of public services is not rocket science. The moment citizens approach a public institution to resolve a dispute, request protection, pay taxes or renew a passport or driver's license, they gauge the quality of that experience. Their first contact shapes their perceptions and image of the



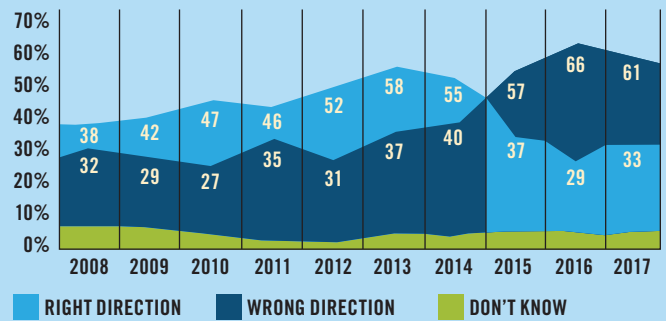
Afghan boys play volleyball outside of Kabul. Improving government services to Afghanistan's rural poor would help stabilize the country. REUTERS

A Survey of the Afghan People

AFGHANISTAN IN 2017

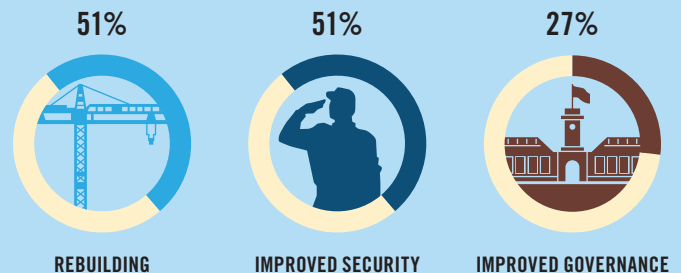
Amid escalating violence and the U.S. administration's new South Asia strategy, what do Afghans think of pressing issues facing the country: security, economic growth and employment, governance, migration, and women's issues? The Asia Foundation's 13th annual survey, Afghanistan's longest-running opinion poll, reveals insights from 10,012 Afghan respondents in 18 ethnic groups from all 34 provinces.

NATIONAL MOOD: DIRECTION OF COUNTRY



33% of Afghans report country moving in a positive direction, up from 2016

REASONS FOR OPTIMISM



government. When needs are met legitimately, citizens are satisfied, and trust and confidence in government are restored.

However, if the experience is negative, citizens will seek alternative channels and, given the circumstances of life in rural Afghanistan, possibly turn to nonstate actors. As a result, an inverse relationship is established between citizens' trust and confidence in state establishments, on the one hand, and anti-state elements on the other.

In fact, this phenomenon has acted as one of the main predictors of security in rural areas of Afghanistan, where citizens have either grown sympathetic to violent extremists or resisted their influence.

THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS

With the generous support of the international community, numerous projects to deliver and improve public services have been executed in Afghanistan. The Afghan government as well as external agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have implemented public service delivery projects in the areas of education; health care; access to justice; issuance of passports, business licenses and land titles; and other basic government services.

These efforts generated temporary positive outcomes but largely failed to deliver the desired sustainable results. There were many reasons for their lack of sustained success — including a focus only on so-called anchor cities. But there were flaws in the overall platform on which the government attempted to improve public service delivery.

While the Afghan public service delivery sector needs transformation from an old-style bureaucratic approach to a modern and citizen-centered approach, the government has been further complicating the old system. Issuance of driver's licenses, vehicle permits, land titles and passports exemplifies an inefficient, bureaucratic and corrupt process of service delivery that has not improved sufficiently despite repeated efforts.

Consequently, the state public service delivery system remains poor in quality and difficult to access. In addition, the system is inefficient, chaotic, insufficiently citizen-centric, and prone to corruption and bribery.

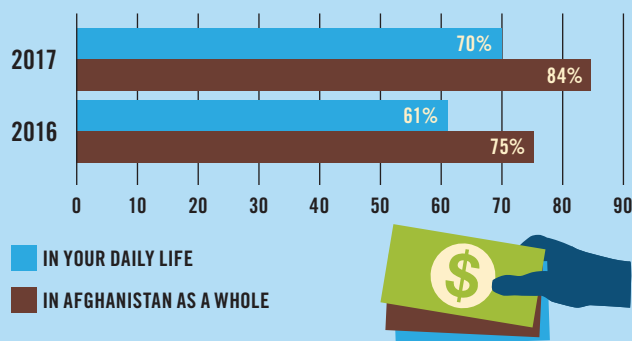
All too often, the authorities have failed to recognize the importance of a citizen-centric public service delivery system as an effective tool to address some of the most pressing socio-economic issues in Afghan society, particularly those pertaining to rural communities.

DETAILS OF THE PROBLEM

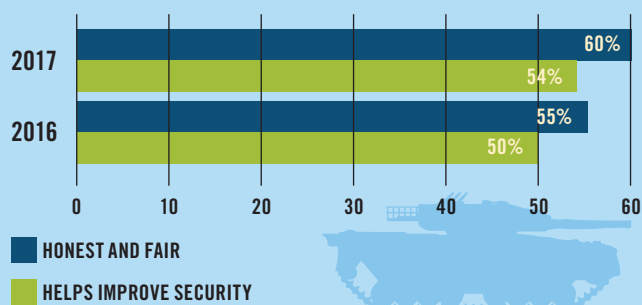
Steps and processes for obtaining some public services are unnecessarily lengthy. A citizen often has to pay bribes to different ranks of government officials to obtain an intended service. If an Afghan wants to resolve a dispute on a small piece of land through the country's official justice system, the process is often time-consuming and costlier than the land's value.

Under such circumstance, rural, marginalized and vulnerable citizens remain largely outside the formal Afghan

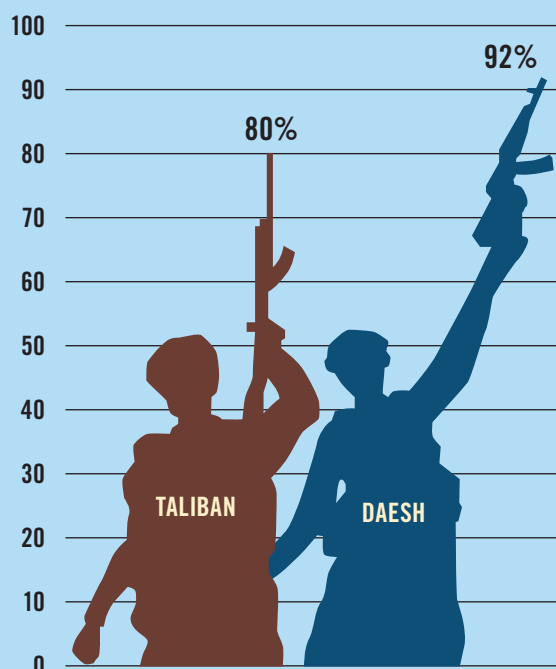
MOST AFGHANS VIEW CORRUPTION AS A MAJOR PROBLEM



PERCEPTIONS OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY (% STRONGLY AGREE)



PERCENTAGE OF PUBLIC OPPOSED TO THE TALIBAN AND DAESH



public service delivery system and become the prey of violent extremists. Some people at the rural villages find it easier to get their cases resolved by armed groups operating in the area than by visiting a government office and wasting time and money on the arduous government approval process.

The consequences of this governmental breakdown run even deeper. Many frustrated members of the younger generation either leave the country in search of opportunities elsewhere or join armed groups. Businesses move their capital to more stable and business-friendly markets outside Afghanistan.

According to a nationwide perception survey conducted by The Asia Foundation in 2017, 61 percent of the Afghan respondents think the country is moving in the wrong direction owing mainly to insecurity and fear, lack of economic opportunities and poor governance. The same report indicates that poor governance plays a role in the willingness of 39 percent of Afghans to leave the country, and 84 percent of respondents consider corruption a major issue across Afghanistan.

This survey took pains to get a broad, representative sample of Afghans: The more than 10,000 respondents came from 18 ethnic groups in all 34 provinces.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Afghanistan needs to restructure the way it provides services to its citizens. A thorough transformation of the existing outdated system to a citizen-centered system — in which government designs and delivers services based not on the requirements of government but those of citizens — is needed.

This could be achieved by adoption of a comprehensive but pragmatic long-term strategy for delivery of public services, combating corruption and restoring the trust of citizens. It would require streamlining and redefining the work of several overlapping and ineffective organizations. Under a new system, bodies such as the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption, the Anti-Corruption Justice Center, the Administrative Reform Commission, the Supreme Audit Office, and the Asan Khedmat might need to merge and reconfigure themselves.

This fundamental restructuring would enable Afghanistan to combat corruption at all levels: national, subnational, provincial, district and village. It would also create an enabling environment for genuine civil society members to join forces with their government in improving public service delivery in their communities to win the hearts and minds of all citizens across the country.

As a development practitioner who has spent the past 15 years working with local communities, civil society, the government and international donors, I strongly believe that Afghanistan has a golden opportunity and the necessary support to amend the counterproductive approaches of the past and start fresh.

By restructuring public service delivery, Afghanistan and its international supporters will win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. The alternative is that violent extremist groups will take advantage of government dysfunction to expand their areas of influence in rural areas and increasingly restrict government rule to big cities and the capital. ♦

RESCUED

from Death

A courageous Iraqi Army unit saves an orphaned 4-year-old girl when Daesh massacred her family in Mosul

UNIPATH STAFF

The battle for Mosul was raging when the leading edge of the 36th Mechanized Brigade, Iraqi 9th Armored Division, came up against Daesh snipers lodged in a multistoried hospital in the Zanjili district. The hospital commanded views of the city's roads, allowing the terrorists to impede Iraqi troops and target escaping civilians.

The Soldiers spotted 150 to 200 civilians — mostly women and children — scurrying across the alleys to reach the safety of their lines. Iraqi commanders quickly issued orders: Cease fire! Let the civilians pass!

Daesh possessed no such scruples. From their sniper holes and hideouts, the terrorists unleashed fire on the escaping families, mowing down women and children without remorse. Within minutes everyone was dead.

"We were shocked when, suddenly, terrorists turned their weapons on these innocent people," said Brig. Gen. Mustafa Sabah Alazawi, the unit's commander.

A half-hour after the crime, troops spotted the movement of a child in the pile of bodies. She was cowering under her mother's blood-soaked *abaya*, surrounded by the bodies of her father, sisters, aunts and uncles. She was isolated, terrified, cold and alone.

As Gen. Mustafa and his men were soon to learn, this tiny orphan was only 4 years old. Her name was Taiba.

Despite the difficulties of attempting a rescue — the terrorists still occupied the tactically advantageous hospital — Brig. Gen. Mustafa and his men drew up detailed plans to save the girl at any cost:

"I ordered the advance of an Abrams tank and armored vehicles and heavy fire to suppress the sources of enemy fire, and I sought air support from coalition forces. Our group included a medical team from an American nongovernmental



AL-MAWSELEYA SATELLITE CHANNEL

organization... As we approached the site of the bodies, we set off smoke bombs to obscure Daesh snipers' vision. We quickly pulled the little girl out, made sure there were no other injured, and withdrew in our armored vehicles."

The knowledge that the child had endured a terrifying ordeal surrounded by the bodies of her family members was difficult for the Soldiers to absorb. Her bloody clothes and the horror and sadness in her eyes were devastating.

"When the Soldiers took her out of the armored vehicle and saw her for the first time — her clothes were blood-soaked and she was in shock because of what she went through. I couldn't control my emotions as I looked into her innocent eyes. Thinking about her family, I began to cry without even realizing it," the general said. "I stayed with her at brigade headquarters for five days, begging her to eat and plying her with food. But she cried whenever we tried to feed her.

"But on the third day, after I had been away from headquarters since dawn, she was waiting for me in the evening, greeted me when I entered, and agreed to eat with me. My joy at this positive development was indescribable, and we ate together, beginning our father-daughter relationship. I gave her everything she needed and treated her as my daughter, to the point that she began to eat only from my hand.

"But we were in a fierce battle, in a headquarters filled with weapons, and Soldiers cannot recreate the warmth of a home or family. For that reason, I asked one of the families near our headquarters to take care of the girl. Umm Ayman was the woman who volunteered to care of the girl, who would act as her mother and treat her as her own daughter."

But Brig. Gen. Mustafa continued to share evening meals with the girl at headquarters. On one such night he noticed something disturbing.

"Even though she agreed to eat, she ate very little, her

stomach began to bulge, and her temperature rose. I sought the advice of Victor Max, director of an American nonprofit organization called ACB. The organization sent her to a hospital in Erbil, where she stayed for a week. After her condition improved, she returned to live with us for three months, during which she became the focus of the Soldiers, who played with her and showered her with parental affection. We shared her sorrow and joy, her suffering and victory. I was her “papa” and made her feel safe. I provided her and her host family with all the water and food they needed.”

The generosity of Umm Ayman perfectly encapsulates Iraqi hospitality. She recounts her story:

“That morning, I heard a knock on the door, and when I opened it, I saw Brig. Gen. Mustafa Alazawi, leader of the nearby brigade. In his arms was the girl whose story has become the talk of the town since she was rescued by the heroes of the 36th Mechanized Brigade. The story of this stricken girl has strained our hearts with its sadness and pain, for Daesh’s crimes against humanity, including murdering her family, are unprecedented and a complete repudiation of Islam. [Alazawi] said to me, ‘Umm Ayman, you are the best person to take care of this girl because I heard so much good about your family from the neighbors. You also know that we are an army, and we cannot provide her with enough compassion or care for her the way a mother would. I hope you can help me.’

“I smiled and continued the conversation. I was happy to hear what the general said, and I could see from Taiba’s appearance that she needed a mother. I immediately took her in. Her clothes were blood-soaked and in tatters, and her hair was filled with dirt and dried blood. She didn’t speak, but just cried, with great fear in her eyes. I began to bathe her to clean the blood and mud off her body and dressed her in new clothes. At last she seemed to feel some relief. We had a mother-daughter relationship from that moment on. Brig. Gen. Mustafa’s Soldiers brought us clothes and food so that we could feed her despite our challenging conditions and the scarcity of food and water due to the fighting. I have never seen men as generous and brave as the sons of our heroic Army. They wept for her, trying to care for her however possible. Every day they brought her sweets, asking if we needed anything. I was filled with joy and pride in their presence.”

But Taiba’s story and the search for her relatives became Gen. Mustafa’s concern because he was sure it would be difficult for anyone to love and care for the girl like her own family could.

“Despite the knowledge that her father, mother, brothers, and aunts and uncles were all killed that day, and no one from her family remained alive, I couldn’t help but hope. I carried her through the streets of Zanjili hoping to find her relatives. We published her photos on flyers and social media pages. I was ready to adopt her, and many members of our brigade expressed the same willingness, but I knew her own family would provide the warmth and tenderness she needed.”

As he recalled those days, the general wiped away tears.

At the same time, Umm Ayman searched among her neighbors for someone who knew Taiba.

“I took her with me to visit some of my neighbors who

hadn’t left the area, and I asked them if they knew any of her relatives. Whenever I got a tip, I told Gen. Mustafa, who came to see me every evening when he returned from battle. All the neighbors were working to help this child.”

Brig. Gen. Mustafa continued to post stories and pictures about Taiba on social media and Iraqi news stations, and he kept knocking on the doors in the Zanjili neighborhood to see if anyone knew her.

“After Taiba had lived with us for three months, she grew accustomed to living with Soldiers. The chefs at our headquarters knew her favorite meal, and they always raced to provide whatever she asked for. She started to smile, pout and play with them. Umm Ayman’s family grew to love her deeply. Mosul was liberated from the abomination of terror, but there remained a sadness in my heart whenever I looked at Taiba and saw the fear of the future in her eyes. I was sure that we wouldn’t stay in this town much longer and would instead continue our fight in other cities. How would I take Taiba with me, and would she be willing to live with another family in a new place?

“At this point, I was contacted by a family from Diyala province; they told me they were her aunt’s family. The aunt’s husband came from Diyala to Mosul (400 kilometers) to meet me, but I hesitated to hand her over because there were no official documents, and because Taiba interacted with him as if she were meeting him for the first time. After I refused, one of the sheikhs of the Izzah tribe — which I belong to and which happens to be Taiba’s mother’s tribe as well — came to me. He knew her family and was able to give me more proof. But despite all my respect and appreciation for him, I refused to give her to him unless the girl knew the family. I agreed to allow him to come with her aunt and grandmother to see if she knew them, and indeed, they bore the burden of the difficult trip from Diyala to Zanjili and came to our headquarters.

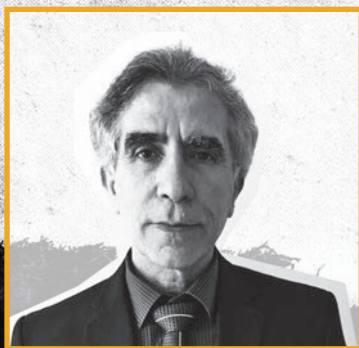
“When Taiba set eyes on her grandmother, she recognized and embraced her, crying in her arms for a long time, as if she were complaining to them or scolding them for leaving her alone for so long. I was reassured that this really was her family, and I felt great relief. I thank God that we could save this girl from death at the hands of killers, and that we didn’t leave her to wander or be killed in Mosul’s streets. We have upheld the military’s honor by protecting a daughter of the homeland.”

Taiba now lives with her grandmother and appears content. Brig. Gen. Mustafa remains in constant contact, hoping her extended family provides her with maternal love and kindness and psychological care that would allow her to forget the recent horrors. Meanwhile, the story of the girl’s rescue has come to the attention of the Iraqi media.

“One journalist asked me how I balanced my duties as a commander with my affection and care for the child. I told him that we are Iraqis and we fight for these people — our people — and are deeply affected by the shedding of innocent blood. This girl went through so much; her story is tragic. As Iraqis, we can’t ignore the misfortune of this innocent girl. I went out to the front lines each morning at dawn and returned each evening, and she was brought to me, and we would have dinner together. With God’s help, I was able to take care of her while fulfilling my duties as a commander leading the battle.” ♦

EXPOSING DAESH'S CRIMES

A LETTER CAPTURED FROM A DAESH INSIDER PROVES HOW IT VEERED FROM THE PATH OF THE PROPHET



ESSAM ABBAS AMIN,
IRAQI MINISTRY
OF DEFENSE
SECURITY AND
INTELLIGENCE
DIRECTORATE

Two things cannot be doubted. The first is that the “caliphate,” with all its structures and agencies, has been wiped from the face of the Earth. The second is that the “state” had men who believed in it to the death. However, we did not know that among the believers in the “state” were outraged men who hated not only Daesh but also its “caliph,” its Delegated Committee, its Islamic jurists, and its religious police “hisbah.”

In a message written by Abu Mohamed Alhusseini Alhashimi on May 7, 2017, under the title of “The Hashemite Advice,” to Daesh leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the author harshly objected to the methods used by the “state” to manage its affairs and those of the people. These objections uncovered another fact that cannot be questioned: People who have extreme understanding of Sharia and its applications cannot build a “caliphate” following the path of the Prophet.

The opinions of Daesh’s Delegated Committee could be objected to by other scholars. Every scholar claimed to be eligible to interpret and understand Sharia. Disputes increased, and the scholars and governors of Daesh found themselves in a real crisis. Said the Hashemite Advice: After we were “hunted by the whole world with all its intelligence agencies, spies, and armies, we, the students of knowledge, were hunted by the realm of Islam.”

It is very clear that the problem did not lie in the disputes that arose from various matters. Instead, the problem lay in how to manage these disputes within a philosophical system that depends on takfir (accusing other Muslims of disbelief) and sees any dispute as a deviation from Sharia.

The end of the “caliphate” left the Islamic jurists, scholars and thinkers of Daesh, as well as its simple fighters, confronting the question: “Why did the victory of God not arrive?” This is a big question, and it is no accident that an answer appears within the Hashemite Advice.

“God, who is strict in His prohibitions and boundaries, would not allow us to claim that we are the heirs of the prophets and then lose it. God would teach us a lesson so that at least we may return to the right path.”

Another part complains: “An entity where rights are lost, where oppression prevails, where spoils are taken, where sons of the Prophet are hungry and where security soldiers on borders deserve zakat and sadakat due to their poverty. You see sons of immigrants begging on the streets and sons of Al-Ansar without the benefits of rights or generosity. The widows of martyrs bargain for their honor because of poverty and need. Where in this is the path of the Prophet?”

The criticism of this discredited “Islamic state” continues: “An entity that twists the meaning of religion and spreads extremism. An entity in which founding father and scholars are cursed, where good people are insulted and where believers are disbelieved. An entity in which dangerous religious innovations prevail. Where is the path of the Prophet in all of this? An entity in which traitors are believed and the trustworthy doubted. An entity where the innocent are jailed and denounced and liars are declared innocent. An entity where the oppressor is judge and the innocent are whipped. An entity where the accused are jailed for months without proof and the oppressed are killed without evidence. An entity where knowledge and scholarship are fought and students are hounded by Arab Spring Muslims without ethics or dignity who possess not a shred of knowledge or understanding. None of them had an inkling of monotheism until Bouazizi set himself on fire! When they describe a scholar, they say ‘He is a danger to the state!’ Where is the path of the Prophet in all of this?”

These sections do not reflect anger but rather the despair of members of that hypocritical so-called “state” in which the “caliph” and his media liked to claim that “the caliphate follows the path of the Prophet.” I cannot imagine how the fugitive caliph could accept the Hashemite Advice while being hounded by curses and accusations for all that happened:

“What a pity that hundreds of thousands of martyrs lost their lives for this state. Thousands of families immigrated, hoping to fulfill what they described as their dream. Then you took the lead and led them astray. Tell me, for the sake of God, what happened to you?”

The “caliph” surely must need a large dose of morphine to shoulder all this blame. Thousands of complaints questioned the “caliphate,” accusing it of failing to follow the path of the Prophet. They even said it followed the path of the Kharijites. As Daesh’s official spokesman, Abu Mohamed Aladnani, implored:

“O, God, if this state is a Kharijite state, I ask that you destroy it, kill its leaders and set its soldiers on the right path. I see that this prayer has been answered as this heresy deepens in us. Why not, since millions of Muslims repeated ‘amen’ after his prayer?”

We found a quick answer from the Lord of the Heavens and the Heavenly Throne to this noble Prayer.

The first assumption was that jurists and scholars were the main beneficiaries of the “caliphate.” Some immigrated and professed allegiance. However, this points to another important fact — the jails of the “caliphate” were filled with religious jurists and Sharia students.

The Hashemite Advice explores this topic: “Belittlement was the norm for the leaders and emirs you put above us. They started to make the same old statements that ‘Sharia jurists are dangerous for the state.’ The disgraced old man Abed Al-Nasser said it to the Kuwaiti Sheikh Abu Abed Albar Alsalihi. He spoke to me about it, and Abed Al-Nasser was the head of the Delegated Committee. Students of Sharia are the most dangerous for the state, said Abu Isahaq al-Iraqi, to a group of judges in Alkhier *wilayat*, and they told me about it. This is the man you appointed from among committee members to manage the judiciary and grievances. As for the judicial system, he spoiled and altered it. This committee that you put us under (the Delegated Committee) with their phrases and words, I pray that God carries them to their graves and sends them to hell.”

And then things progressed to Daesh’s dark jails, with their whippings, beatings, belittling, insults, killing and harassment. As the “advice” document reported:

“Yes, harassment. The story of the two women, the American Um Yosef and the French Ribita, are familiar to our ears. People speak about what the interrogators of the feared and oppressive diwan did to them. As for killing, it is permissible but not if based on bald-faced lies. Killing was taken from its rightful and deserved place and is justifiably called murder, delusion, arrogance, terrorism, terror and injustice.”

What makes us believe the testimony of Abu Mohamed Alhusseini Alhashimi is that he wrote it without any external pressure, addressing the “caliph” by name: “O, Ibrahim, you are not far from the arrows of the good.”

He endangered his life by crossing more than one red line and exposing many dangerous topics.

This is just one of many examples, and the days to come will reveal more dangerous things about this “state” that claimed to follow the path of the Prophet. ♦



— TESTING —

ONLINE DEFENSES

GLOBAL LEADERS MEET TO SHARE BEST
PRACTICES AGAINST CYBER ATTACKS

— UNIPATH STAFF —

S

ometimes the most exhaustive of cyber defenses fail to account for the simplest of cyber attacks. A good example of this lapse in security is spear phishing.

Disguised as everyday emails, this type of cyber attack tricks users into giving up sensitive information such as usernames, passwords and credit card information.

Viruses, spyware and other malware are spread in emails with attachments, or — if a system routinely blocks attachments — bad actors will include links in emails to entice users to visit malicious websites.

To foil these and other assaults on the critically important cyber sector, an international group of cyber security professionals shared defensive strategies at the Central Region Cybersecurity Conference (CRCC).

**“WE NEED TO EXPAND THE
KNOWLEDGE WITH OUR PARTNERS
AND OUR NEIGHBORS SO THAT WE
ALL BECOME STRONGER.”**

— Iraqi Staff Maj. Gen. Mahdi Yasir Zubaidi,
director of military communications for the Ministry of Defense

Held in April 2018 near Washington, D.C., this year’s CRCC included participants from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.

The event also included representation from U.S. Africa Command and military observers from Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Kenya, Nigeria and Morocco. Co-hosting the event with U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) was the U.S. Department of State.

“Every partner represented at this conference has something to contribute to strengthen our collective cyber security efforts,” said CENTCOM Deputy Commander Lt. Gen. Charles Q. Brown.

The CRCC is an opportunity for military, academic, government and industry experts to examine cyber threats that impact national security. For three days, the conference fostered relationships among information and communications technology leaders, focusing on testing and evaluation to shore up defenses against cyber attacks. The relationships developed during the conference can help support regional stability and enable organizations to recover more quickly and with less damage when an incident occurs.

No sector of society has been spared from attack: Banks, universities, hospitals, power plants and military installations have all been targeted.

“People are waking up more to these threats that we face across the world,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary Robert Strayer of the U.S. Department of State’s Cyber and International Communications and Information

Policy. He shared recent initiatives to protect U.S. government networks and critical infrastructure and to work with partners to increase cyber security.

“We need a collective defense mentality,” Strayer said.

To overcome vulnerabilities, international collaboration is key, said Iraqi Staff Maj. Gen. Mahdi Yasir Zubaidi, director of military communications for the Ministry of Defense. “We have many mutual threats in cyber security,” Maj.

Gen. Mahdi told *Unipath*. “If we take the fight against Daesh as an example, it took a committed international community to come together and destroy the terrorists in Iraq. It was very successful.”

The same global effort is required for cyber security, he explained, and conferences like the CRCC help open channels of communication with partners.

He was pleased this year’s event included tabletop exercises, as well as participation from African militaries. This allowed for a broad international group of cyber security leaders to analyze indicators of spear phishing attacks.

“We need to expand the knowledge with our partners and our neighbors so that we all become stronger,” Maj. Gen. Mahdi said.

IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMAN FACTOR

- Personnel are the most likely vector of attack.
- System-user training is key to inhibiting cyber enemies.
- A well-trained cyber force is key.

LESSONS FROM THE TABLETOP EXERCISE

- Increase collaboration and engagements to improve interoperability, information sharing and operations.
- Create more multilateral cyber exercises.
- Build more partnerships with the private sector.

BENEFITS OF CONNECTING CYBER CENTERS

- Improved awareness and shared practices.
- More timely notification of threat activity.
- Reduced risk through cooperative partnerships.

HUMANS OVER HARDWARE

There is no shortage of technical tools and hardware designed to foil cyber attacks, but human oversight and understanding remain critical.

“We’ve got to have well-trained personnel that understand the network as well as cyber security and are able to not just protect and defend against threats but react to threats as well,” said U.S. Maj. Gen. Mitchell Kilgo, then director of CENTCOM’s Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate.

This was a common challenge many of the participants discussed throughout the conference. Cyber security professionals are in demand worldwide, and competitive salaries and attractive compensation packages are required, explained Dr. Sherif Hashem, vice president for cyber security at Egypt’s National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA).

Leaders need to account for this in their cyber strategies to ensure a talent pool of cyber experts with up-to-date training, Dr. Hashem said. In Egypt, the NTRA



Jordanian and Saudi officials talk about cyber issues at the Central Region Cybersecurity Conference in May 2018. CENTCOM

sponsored an advanced cyber security training program that led to the certification of 179 professionals from 38 entities in Egypt. Not only did it improve technical expertise, but the program provided an important relationship-building opportunity.

“Creating professional linkages among them is key,” said Dr. Hashem. Waiting until an incident occurs is not the time to start building relationships or trust, he explained.

But recruiting and maintaining a pool of highly trained technical professionals is far from the only challenge. Ordinary computer users must be properly educated and trained so they don’t fall victim to phishing scams and other common threats. User policies must be created and enforced to govern the online space in which users operate, Gen. Kilgo said.

CYBER SUCCESSES

In the 2017 Global Cybersecurity Index report, Oman ranked fourth worldwide regarding its commitment and advances in cyber security among 193 member countries of International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Other Middle Eastern countries topping the global list were Egypt, which ranked 14th, and Qatar, which ranked 25th.

Dr. Salim Sultan Al Ruzaiqi, chief executive officer of the Sultanate of Oman’s Information Technology Authority, explained that his country focuses on a national strategy that clearly defines roles and requires strong private-public partnerships. Awareness campaigns to educate the public are also part of Oman’s strategy, as are regional and international partnerships.



This year's Central Region Cybersecurity Conference included participants from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the United States. CENTCOM

"We are going to face more challenges as the power of technology increases," Dr. Al Ruzaiqi said.

One way the country works to improve preparedness is by conducting national drills with stakeholders within the sultanate and with its ITU Arab Regional Cybersecurity Centre. The center is hosted by the Information Technology Authority and managed by Oman's Computer Emergency Response Team. The Cybersecurity Center conducts drills with 22 Arab countries to help improve resiliency and incident response.

"WE ARE GOING TO FACE MORE CHALLENGES AS THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY INCREASES."

— Dr. Salim Sultan Al Ruzaiqi, chief executive officer of the Sultanate of Oman's Information Technology Authority

Khalid Sadiq Al-Hashmi, assistant undersecretary for Qatar's Cyber Security Sector, said his country has achieved much by adopting international best practices and customizing them for the needs of Qatar.

WAY FORWARD

Brig. Gen. Robert Mansour, chief of operational section for the Lebanese Armed Forces G3 Signal Directorate, told *Unipath* that countries must be equipped to cooperate to thwart attacks.

"The coming war will not be with bullets; it will be

with bits and bytes," Brig. Gen. Mansour said.

Information sharing is essential for success, as well as awareness of cyber security issues among the population. Preparedness and readiness will help minimize risks. "Cyber attacks are not limited to a certain region. These threats are borderless," he said.

This was Brig. Gen. Mansour's first time attending the CRCC, and he found the presentations and tabletop exercise useful. He said the information helped participants brainstorm new ideas and strategies and facilitated sharing best practices among military, government, industry and academic cyber security professionals.

Lebanon is creating a national cyber security strategy that will set the framework for cooperation and coordination. Meanwhile the military and other sectors are taking other critical steps. In 2018, the Lebanese Armed Forces activated their security operations center and network operations center — complementary efforts to ensure uninterrupted, safe network service.

Mohammad Al-Tura, chief of the information technology sector for Kuwait's Communication & Information Technology Regulatory Authority, presented Kuwait's 2017 to 2020 national cyber security strategy. The plan focuses on safeguarding Kuwait's national interests and promoting a culture of cyber security within the public and private sectors.

One of the challenges is to ensure policies are forward thinking and account for advances in technology such as cloud computing and the popularity of internet-enabled devices. "We don't want policies that will kill innovation," Al-Tura said. ♦



An Afghan child sells balloons on a Kabul street.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Stabilizing AFGHANISTAN

Central Asian states are building economic, political and security ties with Afghanistan

SALTANAT BERDIKEEVA

“*Central Asian countries clearly feel the influence of Afghanistan. Instability and escalating tensions there affect the overall climate in Central Asia,”*

Erzhan Ashikbaev, Kazakhstan’s vice minister of foreign affairs, said at a news conference in Astana in January 2018. His words reflect a general sense of concern in the region and a renewed engagement with Afghanistan.

International terrorism, religious extremism, cross-border organized crime, narcotics trafficking and environmental devastation are some of the shared concerns of all five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). Two of the most populous and militarily developed Central Asian states, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, have taken initiatives to serve as peacemakers in Afghanistan.

The presidents of these two countries have held diplomatic discussions with officials from the United States about volatility in Afghanistan and their roles in encouraging peace there.

Furthermore, Central Asian countries and Afghanistan plan to continue discussing regional issues and developing joint measures to improve Afghanistan within a new framework called “Central Asia-Afghanistan.” Regional military leaders discussed cooperative security with U.S.

Gens. Joseph Votel and John Nicholson during a meeting in Kabul in February 2018.

“Central and South Asian countries reiterated their commitment to fighting terrorism throughout the region and discussed ways of working together to counter drug trafficking and other cross-border security problems,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Tom Gresback, spokesman for NATO’s Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan.

While bringing stability to Afghanistan is an overarching goal of all Central Asian countries, their approaches to their southern neighbor appear to be shifting from containing threats to treating Kabul as a valuable and equal partner in matters of conflict resolution and economic development.

Central Asian countries increasingly stress the need for economic development in Afghanistan. Regional leaders have made strides in reaching trade, transit, energy and infrastructure agreements with Afghanistan. Some of the transit and infrastructure projects are already being built, and trade between some of these countries and Afghanistan has increased despite security risks.





A barge navigates the Amu River on the border of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Both countries have agreed to liberalize travel and trade along the border. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

DEEPENING COOPERATION

As cooperation with Afghanistan and its integration with regional economies take a more prominent role in the foreign policies of Central Asian countries, there have been interesting changes in that regard. While more active engagement in Afghanistan is a positive development in the foreign policies of all Central Asian states, the shift in Uzbekistan's position toward Afghanistan was perhaps the most dramatic in the past two years.

UZBEKISTAN

Emerging from an insular society after the death of President Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan has asserted itself not just as a cooperative regional partner under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, but has also signaled its pursuit of a leadership role in Central Asia.

In a breakthrough in relations with Afghanistan, Uzbekistan held an international conference in its capital, Tashkent, on Afghan peace and security in March 2018. Uzbek diplomats have suggested mediating potential peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. It is worth noting that Kazakhstan also proposed holding such talks, but Uzbekistan took the initiative.

Attending the conference were representatives from the Central Asian countries, China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Nations and the United States.

Kyrgyz Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Abdyldaev has declared his country's full support for the initiative. "We all understand that just the willingness of the Afghans and creation of a unified national government in Afghanistan are not enough to achieve peace



“When there is a threat, there is a desire to isolate it. We suggest not isolating Afghanistan, but treating it as a good partner. By creating jobs, we will ... help Afghanistan develop.”

— Kairat Umarov, Kazakhstani ambassador to the U.N.



Afghan laborers unload crates of fruit in Mazar-e Sharif. The country's economic vitality is stimulated by trade with its Central Asian neighbors.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

there,” he said. “First and foremost, a consensus among members of the U.N. Security Council is needed to reach that goal. It is time to demonstrate that a political solution is the only way to build peace and stability in Afghanistan — that is, by holding peace talks between warring sides and reaching national reconciliation.”

Under Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan re-established ties with Afghanistan. According to Andrey Serenko from the Moscow-based Center for the Study of Modern Afghanistan, Mirziyoyev appears to view Afghanistan as less of a threat and more of an opportunity. In geopolitical terms, the Uzbek leadership looks at its southern neighbor as a commercial partner, which includes building a railroad through Afghanistan and selling more electricity by extending lines from Uzbekistan to the Afghan province of Baghlan. Presidents of both countries reached the agreement to build that infrastructure during an official visit of the Afghan president to Uzbekistan in June 2017, the first such visit in 16 years.

Economic ties with Afghanistan got a boost through 40 export contracts signed in 2017, amounting to over \$500 million. Uzbekistan has cut customs duties in half for Afghan goods transiting through Uzbekistan. Perhaps the highlight of bilateral economic relations in 2017 was the creation of a logistical hub, “Termez Cargo,” at the Uzbek-Afghan border, served by a railroad, warehouses, banks and customs offices.

According to Ismatilla Irgashev, special representative of the Uzbek president on Afghan affairs, the hub is expected to be used for Afghan exports and imports. At the same time, both sides express caution about how far infrastructure and economic cooperation will go because of instability in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan considers peace and security in Afghanistan as a pillar of economic cooperation between the two.

KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan’s leaders also see themselves as important regional peace brokers in Afghanistan. Cooperation with the U.S. to tackle instability in Afghanistan was one of the central themes of Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbaev’s January 2018 meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump during an official visit to the U.S. Holding the chairmanship of the U.N. Security Council in 2017, Kazakhstan placed the development and security of Central Asian countries atop its agenda, a key part of which is Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan, a nonpermanent member of the security council, led its delegation to Kabul in January 2018, its first visit to Afghanistan since 2010. The Kabul meeting covered the political, security, socio-economic and human rights situation in the country. According to Kazakhstani Ambassador to the U.N. Kairat Umarov, “When there is a threat, there is a desire to isolate it. We suggest not isolating Afghanistan, but treating it as a good partner. By creating jobs, we will ... help Afghanistan develop.”

Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov spoke to the security council in January 2018 and emphasized that Afghanistan should not be treated only as a source of threats and instability. Given its vast human and economic potential and convenient geographic location, he said, it must be treated as a strong partner in joint economic projects.

Much like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan believes that building transportation infrastructure in Afghanistan, fostering its commerce and helping to educate Afghan youth are vital to its development and integration with regional economies.

Kazakhstan has already invested in several development projects in Afghanistan, including helping to build a hospital in Bamiyan province and a school in Samagan, repairing a highway from Taloqan to Kunduz to Sherkhan-Bandar, and providing free education to Afghan students studying in Kazakhstani universities. By 2020, 1,000 Afghan students will have completed their higher education in Kazakhstan as part of the Kazakhstan-Afghanistan educational program. Similarly, Uzbekistan plans to open an educational center in Termez district in 2018, along its southernmost border with Afghanistan, to provide higher education to Afghan youth, with tuition partly covered by Uzbekistan.

KYRGYZSTAN, TAJIKISTAN AND TURKMENISTAN

These three countries have also ramped up cooperation with Afghanistan. To deepen economic ties, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are interested in selling hydropower to Afghanistan and Pakistan as part of a regional 765-km electricity transmission project known CASA-1000 (Central Asia-South Asia). Construction began in January 2018.

As with any regional infrastructure project, this one is fraught with challenges, such as rough, mountainous terrain, security risks in Afghanistan and financing concerns. Building on economic cooperation, Afghanistan is also seeking to expand educational opportunities for its students in Kyrgyzstan, where more than 300 Afghan students study in universities. In December 2017, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Sapar Isakov expressed his country’s readiness to launch educational cooperation between the universities of both countries.

Afghan leaders are also eager to collaborate with Kyrgyzstan’s Taza Koom project, a nationwide program launched in 2017 aimed at digitizing and automating public administration and furthering electronic commerce.

Seeking greater physical connectivity with Central Asia, Afghanistan is building a railway network to link with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Although the ongoing war in Afghanistan and financing issues have slowed construction, 89 km of the planned 645-km project have already been built from Atamyrat-Imamnazar, Turkmenistan, to Akina, Afghanistan. Leaders of these countries expect to boost trade with each other once the project is completed.



An Afghan works in a wood market in Mazar-e Sharif.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

In addition, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey signed a road and railway agreement on the so-called Lapis Lazuli corridor in November 2017, a route that would bring Afghanistan's trade to Europe's doorsteps. Afghanistan emphasizes the importance of economic cooperation, particularly in large infrastructure projects with Turkmenistan, as the latter ramps up trade with its southern neighbor.

Tajikistan is also strengthening its cooperation with Afghanistan in the transportation sector. Afghanistan views Tajikistan as an important link with the rest of Central Asia. Kabul hopes to increase the country's regional trade with a railway system that runs from South Asia through Tajikistan to other Central Asian countries. A main problem for Tajikistan, as with most regional infrastructure projects, is the security of delivering goods from Afghanistan and the safety of personnel involved in cross-border trade.

CONCLUSION

As the re-energized, inclusive policies of Central Asian countries toward Afghanistan gain momentum, results will be measured by enduring support and commitment to the goals of peace and development, despite existential security threats emanating from Afghanistan. But improvement of regional relations and supporting

Afghanistan alone are not enough to tackle transnational threats, extremism and violence.

Political, economic and social dynamics within individual countries have an impact on regional security. Economic inequality, poverty, corruption, intolerance for dissent and political opposition, human rights abuses and exploitation of ethnic differences are sources of instability and provide fertile ground for violent and extremist thoughts and actions within Central Asian states.

A lack of peace and stability in one country affects those around it, as evidenced by Afghanistan's recent history. Consequently, achieving long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan and its integration into the regional economy will be closely intertwined with the domestic well-being and strength of its neighboring countries. ♦

About the author: Saltanat Berdikieva is a Kyrgyzstan-born author, analyst and blogger on the topics of economics, energy policy and security in Central Asia, the Middle East and the United States.

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

An aerial photograph of the Indian Ocean coastline, showing the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. A red silhouette of Oman is overlaid on the landmass. The text "THE IMPORTANCE OF SEA POWER" is prominently displayed in the lower half of the image.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SEA POWER

OMAN'S SECURITY AND PROSPERITY DEPEND ON THE SMOOTH FLOW OF COMMERCE THROUGH THE INDIAN OCEAN

Oman has a long historical relationship with the sea. Its 3,165-kilometer coastline, noncontiguous territory and strong trading relationships across the Indian Ocean mean that maritime security has been paramount for the nation.

The Indian Ocean has always been less a barrier than an opportunity. Oman boasted a strong Navy as early as the year 807, and by the year 1000 Omani merchant ships had reached China and beyond.

By virtue of its strategic location, Oman has a distinct advantage over other regional states involved in maritime trade and has always looked outward to the Indian Ocean as opposed to the enclosed Arabian Gulf.

As a maritime hub, Oman has enjoyed diplomatic relations with distant nations such as China, Britain, France, the United States and India. Hence, it is not surprising that a country like Oman, whose history is so closely connected with the sea, can claim to have been the only nation on the Arabian Peninsula to have had a sea-based empire. It is no exaggeration to say that Oman's rulers established a sea-based empire between the 17th and 19th centuries that stretched from inside the Arabian Gulf, along southern Iran to the East African coast. This state of affairs lasted into the 19th century. The area shaded red in the map to the right indicates the influence of Oman in the mid-19th century.

The importance of seagoing trade and communication remains undiminished. The Indian Ocean represents 20 percent of the world's surface area and plays a disproportionate role in global trade.

Sixty percent of the world's population lives on or near the Indian Ocean. Sixty percent of global seaborne trade passes through the region. For nations such as India, these waters are literally a lifeline, providing passage for 90 percent of its imports and exports. For China, the figure is more than 60 percent.

Energy shipments are particularly dependent on the Indian Ocean and adjoining waters. The coastline of the Arabian Peninsula is laced with large networks of pipelines and ports handling oil and gas shipments. Two-thirds of oil from the Arabian Gulf region is shipped to Asia, almost all by vessels plying the Indian Ocean region.

Four major chokepoints provide passage for these large tankers: the Strait of Hormuz (17 million barrels a day), the Strait of Malacca (15 million barrels a day), the Suez Canal (4.5 million barrels a day), and the Bab el-Mandeb strait (3.8 million barrels a day).

Omani territory juts into and overlooks the Strait of Hormuz with the Traffic Separation Scheme in Omani territorial waters. This relatively shallow channel, only 21 miles wide at its narrowest, teems with vital seaborne traffic.

What all this means is that maritime security in the Indian Ocean is vital not just for Oman, but for the world. Oman has five main ports that handle trading vessels, cruise ships and fishing boats.

Its two most prominent ports, Salalah and Duqm, are

strategically situated on the Arabian Sea. The other ports are Port Sultan Qaboos and Sohar on the Sea of Oman and Port Khasab in the Musandam governorate in the Arabian Gulf.

In protecting the maritime environment on which my nation depends, we have identified seven main challenges — smuggling and trafficking, pollution, piracy, terrorism, illegal fishing and overfishing.

Tackling these challenges requires multinational cooperation. No single nation can combat these problems within its own resources in so fluid an environment as the Indian Ocean.

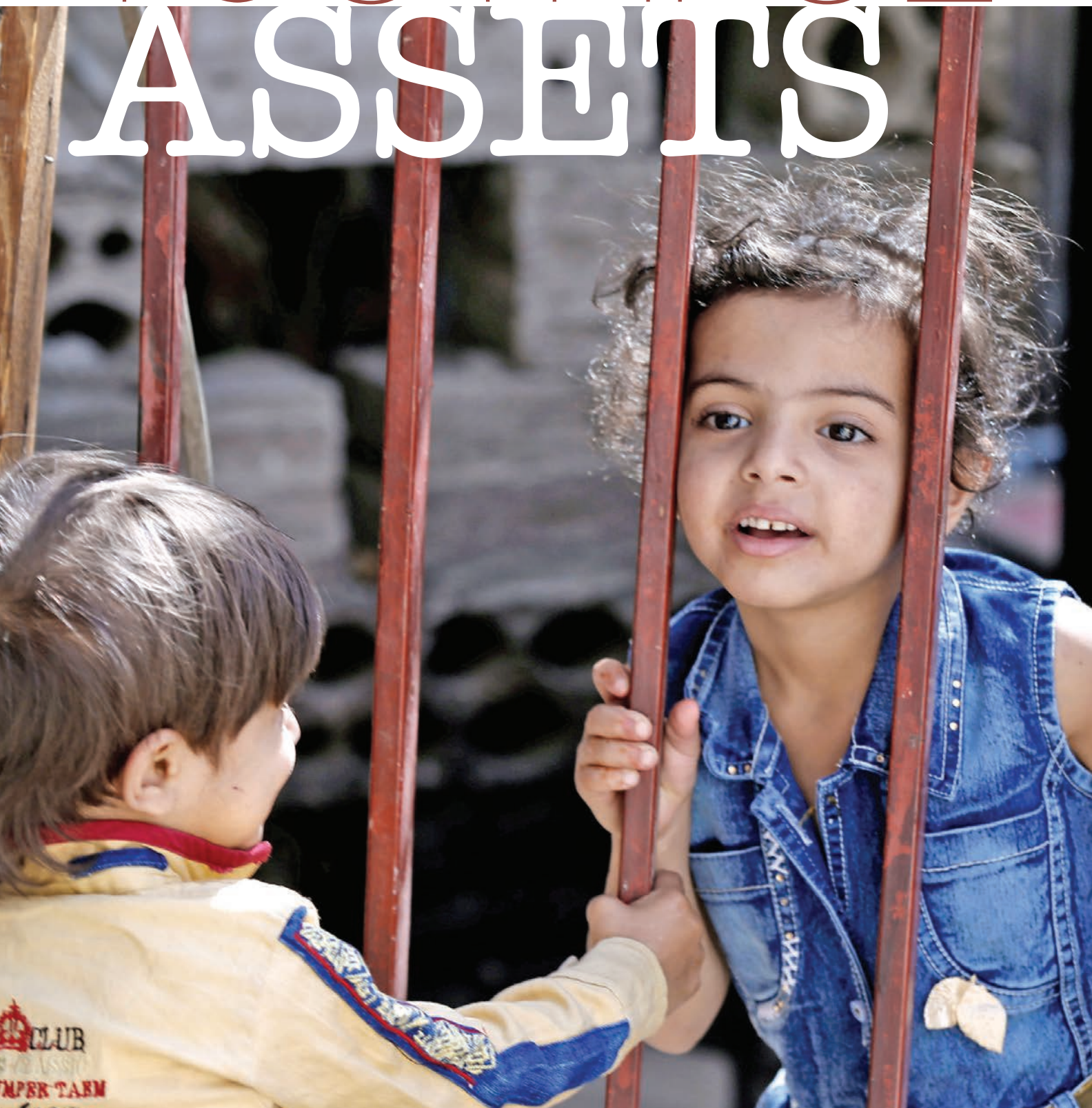
Oman is interested in maintaining a strong maritime capability to support and underwrite its foreign and security policy. Oman takes pride in upholding its international obligations while defending the sovereignty of the nation. We realize that the policies we adopt will determine how secure and prosperous we remain.



Overall, we in Oman have always dedicated ourselves to peaceful resolutions of conflicts. Oman's foreign and security policy is built upon a doctrine of peaceful coexistence with all nations. As His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said stated in 1994: "Peace is a principle in which we believe and a goal which we are striving to achieve without ceasing and without excess." ♦

This article was condensed from a speech delivered to regional alumni of the U.S. Naval War College in Oman in late 2017.

YOUTHFUL ASSETS





POPULATION GROWTH IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL AND SOUTH ASIA CAN BE A SOURCE OF PROSPERITY INSTEAD OF INSTABILITY

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY REUTERS

It's no coincidence that the regions suffering the most violence and political instability over the past 10 years — Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas — have enormous numbers of young people struggling to stay in school and find jobs.

Demographers from organizations such as the World Bank call it a “youth bulge” — higher birth rates and reduced infant mortality creating a large cohort of citizens under the age of 30.

The World Bank estimates that nearly two-thirds of the populations of countries in the Middle East and North Africa are under 30 years old. And a third of those youths are unemployed and often idle. Some have called the phenomenon a “demographic earthquake.”

Playing off real and imagined societal discontents, extremists have succeeded in enticing some of these young people into radical movements. In the worst cases, young people have enlisted in terrorist organizations such as Daesh and the Taliban, dedicated to inflicting violence on innocents.

Not all the enlistees are committed radicals: Stories are rife about teens and young adults joining armed extremist groups in places such as Yemen and Afghanistan simply for a paycheck that exceeds what they could earn in the regular job market.

“The youth bulge represents a critical challenge to economic development in affected countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, other Gulf countries and Algeria,” writes Sabahat Khan, a Pakistani-born academic at the United Arab Emirates’ Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis.

“The long-term economic prosperity that underpins national security and political stability

Yemeni children wait to be vaccinated against diphtheria during an immunization campaign in Sanaa in March 2018.

hinges on providing this growing segment of society with job opportunities as well as education, affordable housing and health care.”

Khan’s comments illuminate an important point: The youth bulge need not be a burden to society. In fact, economic growth and innovation rely on the dynamism of a youthful population willing to take risks for the betterment of their countries.

Yet to harness those benefits, countries of the region can’t simply rely on the prescriptions of the past. This realization is reflected in the initiatives of leaders such as His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Projects in the region include promoting private-sector development, particularly in the field of information technology (IT); reducing reliance on public employment and subsidies; encouraging good government initiatives to build a sense of national unity; and focusing more intensely on primary and secondary education, literacy and vocational training.

And, in cases where food demands are severe because of rapid population growth, countries aim to boost agricultural productivity to provide for hungry mouths.

Exemplifying the efforts of the wealthy Arabian Gulf states to improve the business climate for its people,

Sheikh Mohammed in October 2017 launched the One Million Arab Coders initiative. It uses grants from Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives foundation to provide free online training for Arab young people seeking careers in computer technology.

As the hereditary ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed has long focused on making his emirate a global economic player. But the IT initiative is unique in that the program is open to young Arabs regardless of nationality. The highest achieving students are eligible for cash prizes.

The most popular private-sector employers in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait are technology companies. And a large percentage of youths — up to 39 percent in one survey — seek to create their own businesses within five years. Programs such as Sheikh Mohammed’s aim to give them the skills.

“Many young Arabs have unstoppable potential; all they need is support. We hope this will be the first step in a journey that takes our region towards a brighter future,” Sheikh Mohammed said. “We will not stop launching projects and initiatives to support our Arab communities because the stability of our region relies on it.”

Nurturing the growth of the private sector is a major goal of Crown Prince Mohammed in his efforts to improve the quality of life of young Saudis. Fifty-eight percent of the kingdom’s population is under 30.

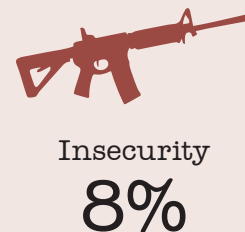
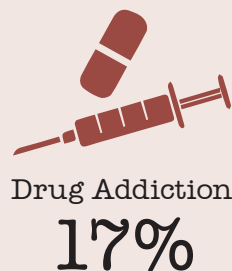
The prince promised a more moderate and open Saudi



Syrian children perform on the street in Wafideen camp in Damascus in February 2018.

AFGHAN YOUTH FACE MANY OBSTACLES

A survey found that a large majority of Afghans think unemployment is the biggest problem facing the country's youth, followed by illiteracy.



Source: The Asia Foundation, 2017

Arabia, less dependent on oil exports and better aligned with the needs of international business. This philosophy is enshrined in the country's Vision 2030 plan.

Roughly two-thirds of Pakistan's population consist of poor youths, and about a third of those young people receive little or no formal education or vocational training. But the situation is not hopeless.

In the country's Federally Administered Tribal Territories (FATA) — long a poorly served part of the country prone to terrorist violence — Pakistan's central government is trying to radically upgrade the educational system.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Gov. Iqbal Zafar Jhagra spoke about the bigger picture when he inaugurated a new government high school in February 2018.

"In any society, youth is the real agent of change, and the youth bulge of FATA is approximately 60 percent," Gov. Jhagra said. "To engage them in healthy activities, efforts are already underway."

Pakistan's neighbor Afghanistan has also made large strides in improving education in the past 15 years. In 2018, an estimated 9.2 million children were enrolled in school, a vast improvement over the 1 million enrolled in 2002, according the Afghan Ministry of Education. About 39 percent of those students are girls.

Gov. Jhagra noted that improving education for girls was also important to FATA, where more than 100 schools have been rehabilitated and 408 new teachers trained, allowing 200,000 more children to enroll.

"The FATA secretariat remains committed to addressing the specific needs of the girls' schools with the aim of improving the basic school infrastructure and ensuring the provision of a safe learning environment," he said.

Some of the problems with education in Pakistan — such as a dearth of schools teaching knowledge and skills beneficial to a modern economy — also apply to the Middle East. Organizations such as Jordan's Queen Rania Foundation have made that the focus of their charitable work.

"What the Arab world needs today is an educational

revolution; we need a fundamental change that will fulfil every parent's ambition to provide their child with a quality education," Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan said.

A 2017 article in the magazine *Newsweek* told the story of Mohsen Samir Mohammed. A poor factory worker in Cairo, Mohammed worried about having too many children with so little income.

But when his brothers and cousins insulted his manhood, Mohammed, despite living in poverty in Egypt, persuaded his wife to have one child after another. The family lives on stewed fava beans and bread and can't afford the 15-cent bus ride to send the children to school.

Mohammed's story illustrates the effects of Egypt's youth bulge. The pursuit of stable population growth ended decisively with the Muslim Brotherhood government of Mohamed Morsi. Egypt's current leaders are left to wrestle with the results.

The rising demand for food and water led President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi to embark on a plan to build thousands of greenhouses on 100,000 acres of mostly arid land throughout northern Egypt. By trapping valuable water, the greenhouses can efficiently produce millions of tons of vegetables for the country's surging population. Egypt is the world's largest wheat importer.

Experts suggest Egypt's youth bulge could spark an economic boom in Egypt — provided the country commits more resources to education. Although the country has successfully enrolled most of its children in schools, international surveys place it near the bottom in quality of primary education.

"A lost generation can easily become a dangerous generation, prone to manipulation by demagogues and extremists who offer simplistic answers and false promises of hope and glory," said columnist Mark Habeeb of *The Arab Weekly*.

"While a well-educated generation can boost a society's overall growth and prosperity, a lost generation becomes a burden, a drag on growth and a constant source of political instability." ♦



Feeding **EGYPT**

A MILITARY-SUPPORTED GREENHOUSE PROJECT WILL SUPPLY MILLIONS OF TONS OF VEGETABLES TO EASE POTENTIAL FOOD SHORTAGES

EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE/MORALE AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Egypt has launched a nationwide strategic plan to improve food security, starting construction on 100,000 acres of greenhouses that will save water and optimize land usage in the mostly arid country.

Egypt's military is not only playing a role in building the greenhouses, but is also contributing 4,900 acres for the project near Mohamed Naguib Military Base, where 1,300 climate-controlled greenhouses will grow vegetables and other crops strategically important for Egypt.

Ceremonies to launch the project occurred in Hammam City near Mohamad Naguib, where Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi listened to a presentation by Dr. Abdul Muneim El-Banna, then minister of agriculture and land reclamation, and Gen. Mustafa Amin, general director of the National Service Projects Organization. Gen. Mustafa's organization will conduct the project under a subsidiary called the National Company for Protected Agriculture.

The first phase of the project will encompass 5,000 greenhouses on 20,000 acres near Hammam,

Abu Sultan, 10th of Ramadan and Amal Village in the Sinai, east of Ismailia. The goal is to ration water usage, satisfy the demands of Egypt's consumers, increase exports and maximize return on investment by applying modern scientific methods to growing crops.

Using ordinary greenhouses for some forms of agriculture saves 50 percent of water compared with open-air agriculture, with a threefold increase in yield. High-tech greenhouses achieve even greater savings, requiring 90 percent less irrigation and generating a sixfold increase in yield on the same amount of land.

Phase one expects to achieve a yield of 1.57 million tons annually of various vegetables on the 20,000 acres, a yield that would require 100,000 acres if open-air agriculture were used. This phase will also create approximately 40,000 direct jobs. Gen. Mustafa indicated that National Service companies have built 86 of the greenhouses near Mohamed Naguib while other companies built 14 percent under the supervision of the Armed Forces Engineering Corps.

Gen. Mohamad Abdel-Hai, board chairman of the National Company for Protected Agriculture, said the



A farmer picks cucumbers in a greenhouse north of Cairo. Egypt is building thousands of greenhouses to boost food security in the country.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

project would reduce the nation's food deficit, reduce prices and produce crops free of harmful chemicals.

"The guidance of the political leadership has been to reduce the food gap in the Arab Republic of Egypt," Gen. Mohamad said.

To achieve added value, Egypt plans to build a packing and sorting plant near Mohammed Naguib in 2018 with a daily capacity of 1,200 tons and also build an organic fertilizer factory that would use compost generated by the packing plant.

A group of nurseries has been set up to provide seedlings that are inoculated to resist soil-borne diseases. These are among the best techniques to increase productivity and reduce costs. Inoculation is the optimal alternative to chemical soil sterilization compounds and helps to improve crop quality. Thirty-two nurseries would serve phase one, with each capable of producing 20 million seedlings per planting period, while a single nursery can have six planting periods per year.

To reap even more benefits from the greenhouse

project, feasibility studies are underway for construction of a modern vegetable and fruit dehydration plant in cooperation with the Italian company Tecnoclima.

Gen. Hassan Abdel Shafi, director of the Military Engineers Department, discussed the value of placing greenhouses near Mohamed Naguib. Technical studies revealed that soil quality, climate and available water made the location suitable for intensive agriculture.

Furthermore, the site is well connected by road and rail to nearby population centers such as Alexandria and exporting hubs such as the Port of Alexandria and Borg El Arab and El Alamein airports. Newly laid pipelines will provide irrigation water for the greenhouses from pump stations and reservoirs.

In addition to the work near Mohamed Naguib, President el-Sissi inaugurated work on greenhouses in Amal Village east of the Suez Canal and at the 10th of Ramadan and Abu Sultan sites. An overview of the project — a film called *Green Egypt* — was released by the Morale Affairs Department. ♦

PARTNERS — AGAINST TERROR

The Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces play a vital role in the kingdom's counterterrorism operations

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY JORDANIAN GENDARMERIE DIRECTORATE —

There is no doubt that the regional security apparatus is preoccupied by the security challenges presented by terrorist activities and plots to undermine stability and civil tranquility. After the Iraqi city of Mosul fell into the clutches of Daesh terrorist thugs, security forces began to change their classic counterterrorism tactics, training instead for combat in densely populated areas and preparing for unconventional operations against groups using civilians as human shields, setting off bombs inside families' homes and taking hostages.



Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces
conduct riot control training.

“Over the past few years, Jordan has made brave efforts in the fight against terrorists, who reject mercy and tolerance and instead manipulate beliefs and ideas.”

—Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh



Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces practice formations before a mission.

In this context, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is among the countries racing to open an international joint counterterrorism training program with the United States. The program stemmed from cooperation between the Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces and the American Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program (ATA). The Jordanian Gendarmerie Training Academy was chosen to host this program at a site equipped with the most updated technology to allow for the most modern tactics in counterterrorism operations training.

Unipath interviewed the director of the Gendarmerie Forces, Staff Maj. Gen. Hussein Al-Hawatmeh, about the importance of this program.

UNIPATH: What is the purpose of this joint counterterrorism training program?

MAJ. GEN. AL-HAWATMEH: Over the past few years, Jordan has made brave efforts in the fight against terrorists, who reject mercy and tolerance and instead manipulate beliefs

and ideas. We have gone to the greatest possible lengths to combat the kharijite gangs and deprive the terrorists of resources. This is our war, which we are conducting to defend our future and values; we fight with all of our allies to defend humanity. Jordan has made many sacrifices to preserve its long-standing values in this area, and its military, security and strategic branches have made tremendous efforts and performed professionally in cooperation and coordination with its partners.

Cooperation in this area between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the U.S. is part of a long-standing partnership reinforced by the political efforts of His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein, the commander in chief of the Jordan Armed Forces, who has called for the union of multiple countries' counterterrorism efforts into an international, holistic movement. He seeks unity and coordination of security efforts among allies and partners in this area because no country is immune from the dangers of terrorism or able to confront it in isolation from the regional and international context.

**Jordanian
Gendarmerie
Forces arrive
at a training
event.**





It was only natural that the Jordanian-American partnership in this area would expand to include issues related to training. The launch of this carefully planned joint program between the Jordanian Gendarmerie and the ATA took two years and several months before both sides' shared aspirations could be met. We chose the current training site because it meets our requirements, including expansive fields and modern buildings. Both groups conducted extensive studies over two years to ensure the site yielded the desired results. The U.S. government and the ATA provided modern equipment, built a modern indoor firing range, and constructed training rooms to simulate realistic counterterrorism operations. Classrooms are better equipped and dormitories are outfitted comfortably to provide an environment conducive to learning.

UNIPATH: What is the capacity of the training center?

MAJ. GEN. AL-HAWATMEH: The center and training program has a capacity of 120 at any one time to maintain high training standards and provide high-quality services to trainees. This figure will double the training capacity of the Jordanian security apparatus in the counterterrorism field.

UNIPATH: How did you coordinate the opening of this critical strategic space with the Gendarmerie Forces?

MAJ. GEN. AL-HAWATMEH: Mutual trust between Jordan and the U.S. and their long history of



cooperation in this field created the basis for launching this project. As for the Gendarmerie Forces, they are a professional security force, organized along military lines, intended to specialize in certain areas. The Gendarmerie was restructured in 2008 under the guidance of King Abdullah and has made extensive strides in advancing its security capabilities. It has played a major role in strengthening law enforcement, tackling crime and combating terrorism. It has also played a leading role in the world through active participation in international peacekeeping forces. The Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces are one of the biggest contributors to international peacekeeping forces, participating in formed police units in numerous conflict zones under the auspices of the United

Nations. Our Soldiers have learned international best practices, enhanced their skills at working with others, and gained a greater understanding of security concerns in the field of joint operations under a variety of conditions.

As such, the Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces today enjoy a distinguished domestic and international reputation for professionalism in carrying out security duties in Jordan and peacekeeping missions internationally. When the need arose to launch a high-quality training program for counterterrorism operations, the Gendarmerie and the ATA were the appropriate options for a partnership, as both had a long history in the field of counterterrorism, distinguished staff at multiple levels, and the ability to enrich this partnership.

**Jordanian
Gendarmerie
Forces train
at the new
counterterrorism
center south of
Amman.**



“The Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces date back to the founding of the kingdom in 1921,”

—Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh

Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces participate in training exercises.

UNIPATH: Why were the Gendarmerie Forces restructured after 2008?

MAJ. GEN. AL-HAWATMEH: The Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces date back to the founding of the kingdom in 1921. It was active until 1956, when Jordanian Public Security was established and entrusted with the task of maintaining security in Jordan. The Gendarmerie gradually disappeared from the country's security work until 2008, when His Majesty King Abdullah issued directives to restructure the force into the current, modernized form.

His Majesty had a forward-looking approach to the future, especially in light of the development of Jordanian society and the increasing security

needs. During changes in the security environment in subsequent years, this force gained a positive reputation by addressing security concerns with a great deal of commitment, discipline, professionalism and respect for human rights. The Middle East has witnessed vast security and political developments, but thankfully, due to the wisdom of His Majesty, Jordan has remained immune to these changes. The Gendarmerie is an active security force that deals with citizens fairly and professionally, providing security for property, safety and infrastructure. We can say that the Gendarmerie Forces has fully adhered to the principles and values of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan by honoring human welfare.

His Majesty the commander in chief has been able to lead the country with great wisdom during a precarious phase. Jordan has shown the world that humanity's values can sometimes be stronger than the traditional military machine to settle civil unrest, but that the presence of a security force capable of enforcing the rule of law remains essential to daily life and the attainment of rights. Building on that point, Jordan's security and stability — despite what may be happening in the region — is based on several foundations, the most important of which are wise and confident leadership, a powerful yet disciplined security apparatus, and Jordanians' deep sense of patriotism.

UNIPATH: What are the goals of the joint counterterrorism program?

MAJ. GEN. AL-HAWATMEH: To increase our capacity to train members of security forces in Jordan and allied countries in the latest methods and tactics of counterterrorism. This is an extension of our determination to curb and eradicate evil through work and coordination with our allies. Our doors are open to security personnel from all friendly and allied countries, and we expect that these security personnel will come to acquire our expertise and skills. Our high-quality training center, the kingdom's safe, stable environment and high training standards are all attractive qualities of our center.

UNIPATH: What do you think about the partnership with the U.S.?

MAJ. GEN. AL-HAWATMEH: The understanding between Jordan and the U.S. has led to a long-standing strategic counterterrorism partnership. This partnership embodies our shared interests, values and objectives in combating the threats of extremism, violence and terrorism. This center is one of the fruits of this long-standing partnership; we may see other projects in the future. The existence of these joint, specialized and high-level training centers is evidence of the depth of the partnership between institutions in both countries — such as the Gendarmerie and the ATA — that work to combat extremism.

UNIPATH: Do the Gendarmerie Forces participate in the Eager Lion exercise?

MAJ. GEN. AL-HAWATMEH: We have participated in the Eager Lion training through our rapid-response units, which participated in a scenario of the security exercise that simulated a chemical attack. The rapid-response

units of the Gendarmerie played a major role in this exercise by surrounding the site of the attack and coordinating with other forces to rescue casualties and prohibit civilians from entering the restricted area. The rapid-response units in the Gendarmerie have received specialized training, are equipped with modern equipment, and are capable of addressing a wide range of security contingencies. These units are characterized by having multiple posts throughout the kingdom, their ability to respond quickly to crises, and their familiarity with arrest and cordon operations during critical and dangerous security operations.

UNIPATH: How do you distinguish your counterterrorism responsibilities from those of the Armed Forces?

MAJ. GEN. AL-HAWATMEH: In Jordan, we have an integrated security system based on coordination and harmony among all military and security institutions. The Gendarmerie is the liaison between the Armed Forces and the Public Security Directorate (PSD). In regular security incidents, the PSD is the first responder; it answers 911 calls or any other emergency call that reaches the security apparatus. When we receive intelligence about a serious security incident, such as riots or hostage-taking, the Gendarmerie is called in because we specialize in handling demonstrations, rallies and dangerous people. If the PSD is dealing with an incident that has gotten out of control, it will contact the Gendarmerie, which will support the PSD's efforts. If there is sufficient intelligence available, we may even attempt to take action before any incident occurs.

As for geographical coverage, the Gendarmerie has rapid-response units stationed in all governorates of the kingdom. In the counterterrorism realm, the Gendarmerie has a unit specializing in counterterrorism operations. Members undergo intensive training, and the Gendarmerie is one of the most effective counterterrorism units in the world. It deals with all counterterrorism issues other than hijackings and airport security, for which there are specialized units in the Jordan Armed Forces. Other than those issues, the Gendarmerie is the first responder to any terrorist act in the kingdom — God forbid.

Defense of national borders remains the responsibility of the Jordan Armed Forces, which possess substantial and sophisticated defense capabilities. There is constant communication and continuous partnership between the Armed Forces and the security services in Jordan, including the Gendarmerie, whether in training, security operations or strategic planning. ♦

QATAR'S CONTRIBUTION TO SECURITY



AN INTERVIEW WITH QATARI CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GEN. GHANIM BIN SHAHEEN AL-GHANIM

UNIPATH STAFF

Unipath: Qatar is an important model of stability and security in the region. What strategies or policies have led to its success?

Gen. Ghanim: Stability and security are a top priority of the state of Qatar, especially in light of increased challenges and conflicts in the region and the spread of terrorism in all forms. To achieve our priorities, the political leadership has sought to empower and strengthen the capabilities of military and security institutions, and develop comprehensive and integrated strategic plans based on developing the human element as the primary focus to implement the defense and security strategy. In this regard, Qatar has endeavored to provide all the necessary means, equipment and advanced weapons that enable the human element to work efficiently and effectively and keep abreast of ongoing developments in operations and training. In addition, continuous training of the military and security forces ensures high preparedness and readiness. This successful strategy turned into a tangible reality of the state of Qatar's security and stability, and its political leadership has succeeded in achieving and securing strategic national interests, which has made Qatar the safest country in the region, according to global indicators, and one of the safest countries in the world.

Unipath: What advice can you offer partner nations to achieve the same success as Qatar?

Gen. Ghanim: There are important facts we must realize. First, countering threats and challenges at the regional and international level requires cooperation among countries to secure security and stability and maintain national prosperity. Second, we must be more proactive in dealing with security threats wherever they arise since they threaten our common security, ravaging the stability of our region and putting us all in danger. The region is witnessing conflicts,

strife, threats and terrorist attacks, which oblige us all to be united to maintain security and stability. The countries in the region must effectively adhere to the comprehensive security strategy agreed upon, seek coherence, give priority to strategic cooperation instead of political competition, and give priority to the collective interests of peoples over individual interests.

Unipath: Qatar cooperates with many militaries across the region and world. Why is this cooperation important for Qatar?

Gen. Ghanim: Qatar has always stressed the necessity of unifying efforts to bolster security, peace and stability. Qatar is keen to achieve this through the participation of Qatar Armed Forces in joint military exercises to strengthen military cooperation and to exchange military expertise among the participating countries. These exercises effectively contribute to improving combat capability and readiness, developing capabilities, promoting interoperability, and handling modern weapons and equipment in all theaters of operations. This type of cooperation will



The Qatar Naval Special Force patrols the coast of Doha. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

also lead to developing participating forces' capabilities in adopting a comprehensive approach — significantly reducing terrorist threats — and coordinating efforts to combat common challenges and threats to global and regional security and stability.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE TO OUR WISE LEADERSHIP FOR ITS CONTINUOUS UNLIMITED SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR ARMED FORCES AND KEEP ABREAST OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF OPERATIONS AND TRAINING.

Unipath: You have made important statements in the media regarding the significance of military training to the success of operations. Which exercises can you single out?

Gen. Ghanim: Military training represents the most important factor for successful military operations; the Armed Forces will not be able to carry out basic tasks without operational and combat training even if they were equipped with modern equipment. The joint exercises such as Eagle Resolve and Eager Lion have increased the combat readiness level of the Qatar Armed Forces and exchanged military expertise among the participating forces. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to our wise leadership for its continuous unlimited support to improve the performance of our Armed Forces and keep abreast of developments in the field of operations and training. We have conducted various joint military training with armies of brotherly and friendly countries, such as the Decisive Decision 13 joint exercise with British forces and joint military exercises with the American forces.

Unipath: How does your military contribute to humanitarian efforts and why is this type of work important?

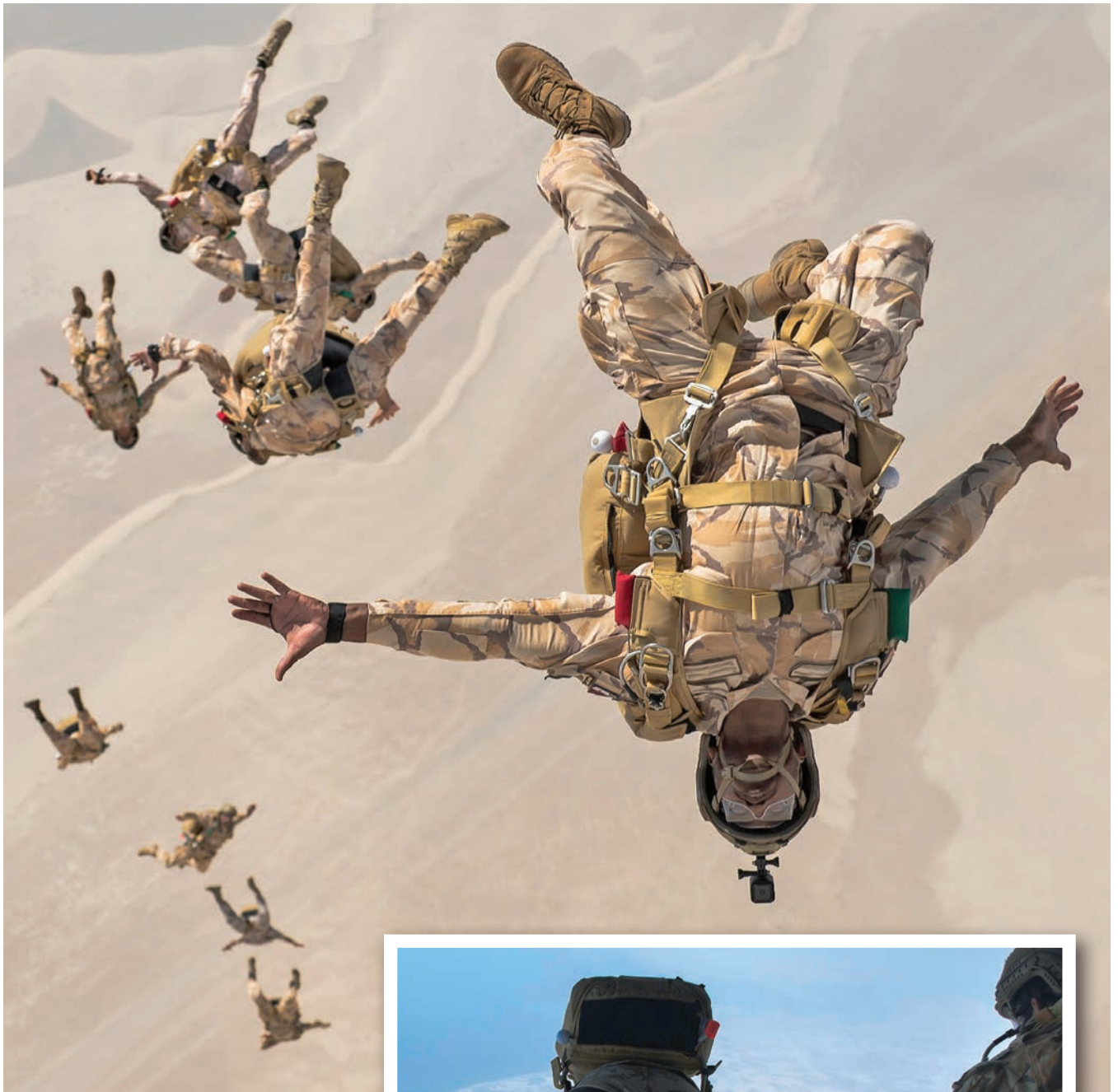
Gen. Ghanim: Qatar has taken a leading role in supporting the humanitarian efforts since the humanitarian field occupies a prominent place in the policy of the state of Qatar and reflects the values and principles of the Qatari people. Qatar has always led from the front when it comes to offering

humanitarian and developmental needs. Qatar has ranked first among the Arab world and fifth globally in terms of providing support for global development projects. Qatar topped the Arab region in 2017 for its support to United Nations humanitarian agencies and ranks seventh globally, according to the U.N. Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Qatar Armed Forces are keen on humanitarian assistance and relief to needy people as a part of the nation's humanitarian commitment. In addition to the military and political levels, Qatar has generously contributed to Yemen Relief and Reconstruction since the beginning of the crisis. Since early 2015 Qatar's relief assistance arrived in Aden by sea via Djibouti-Ambouli International Airport. Doha hosted the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen Conference, which concluded February 24, 2017. The total sum of donations received reached \$223 million, \$100 million of which came from Qatar Charity.

One of the best examples of our Armed Forces' humanitarian efforts was an airlift of people who were injured in the bombing that hit the center of Mogadishu, Somalia, in October 2017. Victims were flown by Qatari military aircraft in batches for treatment upon the directives of His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. A high-level medical team from the Qatar Armed Forces and Hamad Medical Corp. oversaw the transportation and evacuation of critically injured patients. In addition, a C-17 plane of the Qatar Emiri Air Force arrived at Mogadishu Airport carrying Qatar's aid, including medical supplies and first aid in support of the victims of the terrorist bombings.

Unipath: Qatar Armed Forces initiated many efforts to modernize and increase self-defense capabilities. Which programs or strategies would you like to highlight?

Gen. Ghanim: Our wise leadership stressed the importance of building military and security institutions to ensure the safety, security and stability of our country. Qatar has harnessed all its capabilities to achieve self-sufficiency based on a comprehensive and effective strategy. The crisis that Qatar faced has revealed a spirit of solidarity, harmony and defiance that has prevailed among the people in Qatar, both citizens and residents. Qatari leadership has sought to strengthen the economic, security, health and educational fields to achieve the aspirations of Qatar National Vision 2030. Our Armed Forces have a pivotal role in the implementation of Qatar National Vision 2030; therefore, whether we are Soldiers or civilians, we have an obligation to support our military personnel. We have trained our security and military members, provided them with all capabilities, equipment and techniques to keep pace with the scientific and technological developments toward national security and



Qatari special operations personnel conduct a jump over Qatar during joint exercises with U.S. special forces in 2017, the first event of its kind between the two countries.

STAFF SGT. TREVOR T. MCBRIDE/
U.S. AIR FORCE





in accordance with the vision of our wise leadership. National service is one the most successful projects that directly related to the four pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030: human development, social development, economic development and environmental development. In line with the national vision, our Armed Forces have witnessed remarkable development and successes related to building capabilities through combat training and readiness, developing military doctrine, strengthening infrastructure for technical and administrative institutions, modernizing air and civil defense systems and developing equipment and weapons to keep pace with rapidly developing technological advances. Our Armed Forces have taken a quantum leap in possessing modern weapons and new technologies to defend Qatar's land, sea and air.

Unipath: Qatar has announced plans to widen its military relationship with the United States. What does this entail?

Gen. Ghanim: Qatar and the United States held an inaugural strategic dialogue in Washington, D.C., on January 30, 2018. The two countries discussed specific areas of partnership, including defense, counterterrorism, combating extremism, and trade and investment. As those conversations continue, both the U.S. and Qatar believe their continued cooperation will benefit the interests of both countries, as well as the security and stability of the region. This cooperation is key to successfully combating terrorism, countering violent extremism, and deterring external aggression. U.S. officials lauded Qatar's contributions to supporting the sizable U.S. military presence in Qatar under the U.S. Central Command. The two governments issued a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, affirming the two countries' joint commitment to promoting peace and stability and countering the scourge of terrorism. As mentioned earlier, we have a common enemy, and we must unite to defeat this common enemy.

Unipath: What are Qatar's top security issues, and how important is regional cooperation to resolving them?

Gen. Ghanim: We believe in the importance of regional cooperation to resolve security issues such as supporting counterterrorism efforts, security threats and their funding sources, countering violent extremism and piracy, and maintaining regional security and stability. Qatar and its wise leadership have adopted dialogue and political solutions as a dispute-resolution mechanism. Avoiding crises, building partnerships in peacebuilding and contributing to international security and stability represent a strategic option in the Qatar National Vision 2030 and are consistent with its international commitments and firm humanitarian positions. Under the wise leadership of our emir, Qatar continues pursuing its comprehensive approach to security. Our

military and security institutions are constantly working toward protecting Qatar's sovereignty and maintaining the safety and security of citizens and residents. Despite difficult circumstances, Qatar affirmed its support for a strong Gulf Cooperation Council that is focused on countering regional threats and ensuring a peaceful and prosperous future for all our nations. This requires unifying efforts to resolve crises rather than separation and diaspora, which will only lead to undermining security and stability.

STABILITY AND SECURITY ARE A TOP PRIORITY OF THE STATE OF QATAR, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF INCREASED CHALLENGES AND CONFLICTS IN THE REGION AND THE SPREAD OF TERRORISM IN ALL FORMS.

Qatar is also keen to contribute actively to the international community's efforts for sustained strategic security and development support. Qatar is omnipresent in most U.N. activities and in regional and international groups working on finding solutions to regional and international crises, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace building. It is one of the troop-contributing countries participating in U.N. peacekeeping missions. As His Excellency Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah, deputy prime minister and minister of state for defence affairs, said: "Our history in Qatar is the history of peace, not war, and a history of salvation and help, not betrayal."

Unipath: How does Qatar, a major global gas producer, ensure the free flow of its exports in the Arabian Gulf?

Gen. Ghanim: Since its complete independence in 1971, Qatar has emerged as one of the world's most important producers of oil and gas in the world. Qatar sits on 14 percent of the world's estimated proved natural gas reserves and is the third largest in the world. Regardless of political challenges, Qatar sought to ensure the free flow of its natural gas exports across the Arabian Gulf and to find alternative solutions, while adhering to international guidelines and regulations related to energy flows. I would like to point out that we have maintained Qatar's leading position as the world's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) producer and exporter, even in the most challenging circumstances, by using various solutions to ship and deliver LNG to global markets. ♦



Service to Society



**Qatar Armed Forces
Chief of Staff Lt.
Gen. Ghanim bin
Shaheen al-Ghanim**

UNIPATH STAFF

When His Highness Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar visited Washington, D.C., in April 2018, he came with a clear message: “Qatar is ready to play a pivotal and long-term role in maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East.” This role depends on Armed Forces that are keen to protect their homeland and its achievements, along with a defensive military strategy that maintains security and stability.

To build powerful Armed Forces, the emir relies on experienced Soldiers with strong determination, patience, steadfastness and pride. Qataris called these knights *raei al-samlah*, a local term that means “man of determination.” *Unipath* interviewed one of these knights with the *samlah* spirit.

He is Qatar Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ghanim bin Shaheen al-Ghanim.

Gen. Ghanim’s view of the relationship between citizen and state is exemplified in his support for the country’s new National Service Program that recruits its sons for military service and prepares them to answer the call of duty at any moment. The general is encouraged that the first graduates of the program emerged well-prepared for service and benefited from the expertise of several countries. In return, the military has an obligation to be honest if it is to successfully represent society.

“Any lies or misleading facts will have a short life span on both the source and receiver alike. Honesty is one of the most important factors affecting continuity and success in our work,” he said. “Even with our media campaigns, we are very keen to maintain our credibility and not change what we have said as time passes. This is our approach with the people and the media, and it has been a successful approach over years, not only in times of crises. This approach we used in the past and present has guaranteed for us that we are successfully invested in the future.”

But Gen. Ghanim emphasized that credibility requires concerted efforts by all citizens, whether members of the military, politicians, economists, journalists or security

“We must take care of that hope and protect it from harsh winds and weather changes, encouraging it to grow, blossom and bear fruit and produce new seeds.”

– Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ghanim bin Shaheen al-Ghanim

officials. “Together, these efforts will ultimately lead to building the country,” he said.

Gen. Ghanim was born in Qatar in 1955 and graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in Great Britain in 1975. He undertook basic pilot training in Saudi Arabia, where he learned to fly the F-5 fighter jet.

A series of important appointments followed. Starting with command of the 7th fighter squadron of the Qatar Emiri Air Force, equipped with Mirage F1 fighter jets, he rose to command the Air Defense Wing. He later took charge of the Air Operations Center, before his promotion to director of Qatari air operations.

Gen. Ghanim received a bachelor’s degree in air science and earned a fellowship at the Pakistan Air War College. He has participated in numerous regional and international meetings, conferences and forums in the United Kingdom, France, the United States and elsewhere.

Military life came naturally to Gen. Ghanim, a true son of Qatar.

“When I started my journey, it was part of the self-realization process. We’ve been raised in our Arab culture based on a foundation of accepting challenges, patience and perseverance. As we say in Qatar: ‘Endure and persevere.’

“We have been raised in an environment that has witnessed a dramatic shift and requires of us much patience and endurance. To quote a local proverb: ‘He who is without patience is not a real man.’ God bless all our sheikhs who, since the beginning of our military careers, have given us their trust and a lot of authority and responsibility.”

The general recalls with pride the faith that Emir Sheikh Tamim placed in him by appointing him director of operations for the Asian Games in 2006.

“God bless you, thank you for being patient with our ignorance and our challenges in order to be productive people and contribute to our society,” the general told the emir.

In advising young officers, Gen. Ghanim instructs them in the need for trust and discipline.

“When young officers concentrate on those two processes, they will be able to excel in their work, and they also need to attach importance to continuing education and development,” he said. “They should not stop after receiving a college degree or graduating from military school, national defense school or any other military institutions, since education is a constant process that guarantees the development of their abilities and sharpening their skills.”

Gen. Ghanim has a strong philosophy about the role of military commanders in relation to their troops. It starts with a strong sense of service toward their men in all parts of their lives. If the troops have little confidence in their leaders, how can they perform their duties effectively?

“This Soldier knows his duties very well, and he has clear instructions. He knows that he will get the care that he deserves, not only in his workplace, but everywhere. This Soldier should be safe and at ease in his concerns about his family because these factors will affect his efficiency in performing his duty,” the general said.

“We are not only responsible for providing this Soldier with weapons and munitions or giving him instructions and restrictions; we are also responsible for everything affecting his way of thinking to perform properly and in accordance with his orders. Most important, this Soldier should have the confidence to speak up without fear of reprisal when he criticizes an incident or notes some deficiency in his work processes.”

Gen. Ghanim praised the wisdom of Qatar’s leaders for their focus on building the military and security institutions to guarantee the safety and stability of the country. That effort includes building a sense of purpose so that they turn their energy toward improving society.

“Our political leadership made sure to invest in youths to become productive individuals who contribute positively to their community,” he said. “We know that planting hope will not be achieved in one day. We must take care of that hope and protect it from harsh winds and weather changes, encouraging it to grow, blossom and bear fruit and produce new seeds.”



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

EGYPTIAN NAVY DEFENDS RED SEA

UNIPATH STAFF

Egyptian and French naval forces converged on the Red Sea in February 2018 to demonstrate the importance of multinational cooperation in protecting shipping lanes from terrorist attacks.

Cleopatra 2018 was the name of the joint training exercise that included naval gunfire with live ammunition, helicopter missions launched from Mistral class amphibious assault ships, refueling operations on a Red Sea island, and searches and seizures of suspect vessels.

Egypt supplied units from its southern fleet, including the Mistral-class Anwar El Sadat, several frigates of the Gowind class, missile launchers and elements of special naval units.

Egyptian commanders viewed Cleopatra 2018 as inseparable from counterterrorism operations farther north in and around the Sinai Peninsula, where defense of the Suez Canal is a military priority.

“The drills come in conjunction with the Navy units executing set operations within the comprehensive Operation Sinai 2018, to boost the sea theater in the Mediterranean and Red seas to preserve navigation and to prevent infiltration and smuggling along Egyptian coastlines,” Egyptian Armed Forces spokesman Col. Tamer El-Refa said.

Lt. Gen. Mohammed Farid Hegazy, chief of staff of the Armed Forces, observed the last stages of the Egyptian-French training, acclaimed as the largest joint naval exercise in the Red Sea. He was joined by Vice Adm. Ahmed Khaled Hassan Saeed, commander in chief of the Egyptian Navy.

Lt. Gen. Hegazy praised the depth and breadth of the Egyptian-French relations and lauded Navy professionalism for contributing to the nation’s defense against terrorism. Sources: Egyptian Ministry of Defense, Ahramonline



International Donors Aid Lebanese Military

UNIPATH STAFF

To aid in the fight against terrorism and promote national reconciliation, Lebanon received pledges for hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of military aid during a multinational security conference in Rome in March 2018.

Although most of the donations came from European countries and the United States, Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia raised the possibility of contributing money in the future.

Lebanon is in the process of outlining a five-year National Defense Strategy that suggests ways in which the country can improve its military and internal security forces.

In 2017, in an operation called Fajr al-Joroud, Lebanese forces drove remaining Daesh fighters from lands abutting their northeast border with Syria. Terrorists had infiltrated the region around the town of Aarsal.

"We will support Lebanon's Army and security forces depending on their needs," a Saudi diplomat told Lebanese newspaper *The Daily Star* in Rome. "The Army shall decide what it needs, and Saudi Arabia will see what it can do."

France was the top donor to Lebanon, pledging 400 million euros in a line of credit to buy French military equipment. The United States noted that it had spent nearly \$2 billion since 2006 on the Lebanese Army and security services.

The meeting was also attended by U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres and Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Ahmed Aboul Gheit. Representatives also arrived from countries such as Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Sources: *Asharq Al-Awsat*, *The Daily Star*, *Naharnet*



Gen. Joseph Aoun, commander, Lebanese Armed Forces, left, and Gen. Joseph Votel, commander, U.S. Central Command, salute troops during a visit by Gen. Votel to Lebanon in 2017. TECH. SGT. DANA FLAMER/U.S. ARMY

Yemeni Forces Rout al-Qaida

UNIPATH STAFF

Yemeni forces emerged victorious in a military operation to purge al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula from Abyan and Shabwa governorates in March 2018.

Operation Sweeping Torrent, backed by forces from the Arab Coalition, including Saudi and Emirati troops, also netted warehouses containing missiles, explosives, bullets and other ammunition.

The local commander, Col. Fahad Gharama, said Yemeni troops supported by United Arab Emirates fighter jets ousted al-Qaida fugitives from the mountains in Abyan's Al Mahfad district, a former terrorist stronghold. The regional al-Qaida commander died in the attacks.

"We have cleaned Al Mahfad's military camps, valleys, villages and mountains from al-Qaida," Col. Gharama said.

Yemenis vowed to prevent the return of terrorists to this mountainous terrain that had long harbored terrorists and rebels.

"We have set up permanent checkpoints in the liberated areas, reinforced the old checkpoints with more Soldiers, and placed the Rapid Deployment Force on a high alert to thwart any counterattack by al-Qaida," the colonel said.

On another front, Yemeni and Arab Coalition forces were also pressuring rebel Houthi forces near the Yemeni capital of Sanaa. Sources: *Gulf News*, *Al Arabiya*



Pakistan Navy STOPS Drug Smugglers

UNIPATH STAFF

A Pakistan Navy ship participating in Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) seized \$197 million worth of hashish in February 2018 in the Arabian Sea.

Crew members of Pakistan Navy ship Aslat pose among 5 tons of hashish they seized as part of CTF 150.

COMBINED MARITIME FORCES

Pakistani warship Aslat discovered the 5 tons of hashish after requesting permission to board an unregistered dhow in international waters. A dhow is a traditional sailing vessel

in those waters. The seizure continued a recent string of successes in drug interdiction for the multinational naval task force.

Between November 2017 and early February 2018, seven ships in CTF 150 confiscated an estimated \$1 billion worth of illegal drugs, including 1.5 tons of heroin.

The task force's area of operation encompasses more than 2 million square miles of the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman. These waters include some of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

Commodore Mal Wise of the Royal Australian Navy, then commander of CTF 150, commended his Pakistani partners.

"The recent seizure with PNS Aslat highlights the expertise and local operational knowledge of our partner navies that is key to achieving success," Commodore Wise said.

CTF 150 is part of the Combined Maritime Forces, based in Manama, Bahrain.

Source: Combined Maritime Forces

Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan Cooperate on Border

SALTANAT BERDIKEEVA

Highlighting improving relations between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov approved an agreement in January 2018 to improve security on the countries' long common border.

Diplomats hammered out the agreement in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, in October 2017. It promises to strengthen stability, cross-border security, and trust between the two countries. In addition to improving cross-border relations, the agreement facilitates cooperation on regional security issues such as counterterrorism, drug trafficking and illegal migration.

Relations between the two neighbors have improved since the 2016 accession of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Until recently, the 1,374-kilometer border that Kyrgyzstan shares with Uzbekistan was a source of contention.

The new agreement covers close to 85 percent of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, leaving the fate of 324 kilometers unresolved. According to Komish Rashidov, Uzbekistan's ambassador to Bishkek, his country is ready to continue dialogue on border issues. Both countries expressed a willingness to cooperate at central and local government levels.

A turning point in relations was the September 2017 opening of border checkpoints blocked after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. Citizens of both countries can cross the border without presenting anything more than a passport or similar identification card.

Sources: Knews.kg, 24.kg, Kloop.kg



AFP/GETTY IMAGES



JORDAN ENLISTS FEMALE HELICOPTER PILOTS

UNIPATH STAFF

Jordan is defending its borders with a fleet of new UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters flown in part by female pilots.

Lara Al-Hawawsheh and Aya Al-Sourany, both 2nd lieutenants in the Royal Jordanian Air Force, were introduced at a January 2018 ceremony in which a final shipment of Black Hawks was delivered to bolster Jordan's Quick Reaction Force.

Al-Hawawsheh and Al-Sourany are two of six female helicopter pilots trained in the United States with the support of the U.S. Counter-Terrorism Partnership Fund.

"The women take pride in serving in the military. They love their country. They do a great

job defending their country. They train so hard," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Elizabeth Kelpis.

Among the attendees at the Black Hawk ceremony at King Abdullah Air Base near Zarqa were U.S. Central Command Commander Gen. Joseph L. Votel, His Royal Highness Prince Feisal bin Al Hussein and Jordanian Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Freihat.

The helicopter force allows Jordan to move troops and supplies anywhere in the country to strengthen borders and repulse enemy fighters who might consider crossing into Jordan from Syria.

"U.S.-Jordanian military cooperation is very strong and a


key component in our joint effort to defeat Daesh," said Brig. Gen. Jaber al-Abbadi, Jordan's Airlift Wing commander.

Gen. Votel reiterated U.S. support for Jordan's counterterrorism efforts.

"Jordan has been a fantastic partner for a number of years here; I think what you saw in our demonstration here today is the maturity of our relationship," Gen. Votel told CNN. "Jordanians are operating top of the line equipment and doing a great job with it."

Women make up about 5 percent of the Jordan Armed Forces and have played a prominent role in missions as far afield as Afghanistan.

Sources: Reuters, Colorado National Guard, CNN



"The women take pride in serving in the military. They love their country. They do a great job defending their country. They train so hard."

~ U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Elizabeth Kelpis

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NATO TRAINS IRAQI TROOPS

UNIPATH STAFF

To prevent a resurgence of terrorist groups such as Daesh, the Iraqi government has asked NATO to set up specialized military academies to develop the skills of Iraqi troops.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said a training mission in Iraq drawing on the strengths of European militaries will aid in “projecting stability” in the Middle East.

“NATO already trains Iraqi forces. But establishing a mission will make our current training efforts more sustainable,” Stoltenberg announced in February 2018. “It would benefit from better resourcing and a well-established process for allies to contribute forces. We will also plan to help the Iraqi forces become increasingly professional.”

In the past, NATO has sent temporary “mobile training teams” to educate Iraqi recruits in areas such as logistics, treating battlefield wounds and countering improvised explosive devices. In some cases, Iraqi Soldiers have traveled to countries such as Serbia to train.

NATO’s training mission extends beyond Iraq. Stoltenberg noted that the fight against violent extremists requires well-trained militaries across the region.

“As our experience has shown, building local capacity is one of the best tools we have in the fight against terrorism,” the secretary-general said. “NATO continues to help strengthen the Afghan security forces. And we work with our partners like Jordan and Tunisia.” Source: NATO



SFC. ANTONIO LEWIS/U.S. ARMY

An Iraqi Soldier, right, learns to detect improvised explosive devices from a Spanish NATO trainer in February 2018.



Kuwait Donates Billions to Rebuild Iraq

UNIPATH STAFF

Kuwait has agreed to donate \$2 billion to help rebuild Iraq after the depredations of Daesh. The contribution was announced at the Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq, partly organized by the United Nations in Kuwait City in February 2018.

In announcing the donation, His Highness the Emir of Kuwait Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, highlighted Iraq's suffering at the hands of Daesh and its affiliates.

"We realize the scale of destruction wrought on Iraq as a result of terrorist organizations' control of some of its lands," the emir said.

He added: "Iraq's stability is an inseparable part of security and stability of the state of Kuwait and the region."

The summit in Kuwait brought together representatives from dozens of nations and nongovernmental organizations to provide aid toward Iraqi reconstruction. In addition to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Turkey also agreed to provide billions of dollars to help the Baghdad government rebuild its war-torn northern provinces. All told, \$30 billion in donations were pledged to Iraqi reconstruction.

Much of the money would go toward housing and infrastructure damaged during Daesh's occupation of cities such as Mosul. The U.N. estimates 40,000 homes were destroyed in Mosul.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres praised Kuwait for its service, not just to Iraq, but to

His Highness the Emir of Kuwait Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, right, attends the Iraqi reconstruction conference with then Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Syria and other countries suffering from conflict. Other beneficiaries of Kuwaiti generosity include Chad, Somalia and Sudan.

"I thank the government of Kuwait for demonstrating, once again, its commitment to its neighbor," the secretary-general said. "We are all grateful to the emir for his role as a bridge builder, an honest broker, and a source of support to countries in the region and around the world."

Sources: United Nations, Kuwait Times, Deutsche Welle



Bahraini Forces Celebrate Military's 50th Anniversary

UNIPATH STAFF

Bahrain marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of its military with a multinational live-fire demonstration in Manama involving troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The February 2018 "Power of Determination" joint mobilization drill was conducted by the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) in the presence of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, supreme commander of the Armed Forces.

The king's guests included then Saudi Chief of Staff Gen. Abdulrahman bin Salah Al Banyan, Emirati Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Hamad Mohammed Thani Al Rumaithi, and Peninsula Shield Joint Forces Commander Maj. Gen. Walid bin Falah Al Dhaheri.

As King Hamad watched the forces carry out precise drills, he praised their high professionalism and morale and urged them to continue the fight against terrorism.

"Challenges facing the region require rallying ranks and constant readiness," the king said.

Bahraini Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, deputy supreme commander of the Armed Forces, also attended the exercise, as did other royal family members and Bahraini dignitaries.

To celebrate the anniversary, Royal Guard Commander Brig. Gen. Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa presented as a gift to the king a military car used by the BDF in 1985.

The king paid homage to his father, the late Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, for laying the groundwork for the BDF and Bahrain's prosperity. Sources: *Asharq Al-Awsat*, Emirates News Agency-WAM, *News of Bahrain*



"The BDF will always remain the bulwark of the nation and a force of goodness and peace."

~ His Majesty King
Hamad bin Isa
Al Khalifa of Bahrain

Uzbek Police Partner with Multinational Colleagues

UNIPATH STAFF

A reform of Uzbekistan law enforcement agencies that emerged in April 2017 has started bearing fruit. A recently created Department of International Cooperation under the Uzbek Ministry of Interior has successfully launched interagency coordination groups with police in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and other countries.

"The results are spectacular," department head Col. Shahrukh Giyasov said.

He cited an example of how close cooperation between law enforcement agencies in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan helped capture a criminal who killed a family in the eastern Uzbek province of Andijan.

Enhanced collaboration and information exchange between law enforcement agencies of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan also benefits the fight against religious extremism, illegal migration, and drug trafficking in Central Asia.

Prosecutor general's offices in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan signed a cooperative agreement in February 2018 to protect the rights and freedoms of citizens of both countries and to provide mutual assistance in fighting crime, particularly along the border.

Col. Giyasov stressed that Uzbekistan was in the process of creating similar law enforcement coordination groups with Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Belarus. In addition, Uzbekistan plans to strengthen ties with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey to fight crime.

"We have identified a number of countries — for example, South Korea, Japan and Israel — where we plan to send a delegation of our specialists to learn about their police work and innovations in law enforcement," Giyasov said.

The Uzbek Ministry of Interior also stepped up cooperation with foreign police training and educational institutions. The Uzbek Academy and Institute of Fire Safety reached educational agreements with universities in Kazakhstan, Russia and China. Sources: *Gazeta.uz*, *Ahnor.uz*, *Narodnoe Slovo*



CENTCOM Hosts Defense Chief Conference in Afghanistan

UNIPATH STAFF

As part of U.S. Central Command Commander Gen. Joseph L. Votel's annual Central and South Asia (CASA) Chiefs of Defense conference, defense chiefs from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asian countries gathered in Kabul in February 2018 to discuss regional security issues and unveil the South Asia strategy.

To showcase the stability of Afghanistan, as well as highlight the progress of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), CENTCOM held this year's conference in Afghanistan with Afghan Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mohammad Sharif Yaftali as co-chair of the conference.

Gen. Votel highlighted the South Asia strategy and the need for all of Afghanistan's neighbors to collaborate to improve security and stability, especially in the areas of border security and countering narcotics flows.

U.S. Gen. John Nicholson, commander of the Resolute Support Mission, and Gen. Yaftali highlighted the gains made by ANDSF over the last year

to include the military campaign against violent extremist organizations, especially ISIS-Khorasan.

Army chiefs from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and discussed increasing cooperation among the countries to stop terrorism and drug trafficking.

Pakistan's involvement in resolving the Afghan conflict is considered vital.

"Pakistan has a chance to be a major force for good," U.S. Ambassador to NATO Kay Bailey Hutchison told journalists in February.

The defense chiefs also used the opportunity to meet with Afghan special forces troops as well as observe the Afghan Special Mission Wing, an elite air unit that supports the Afghan National Army's Special Operations Command.

Sources: Voice of America, The Associated Press, U.S. Army

Top commanders from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia and the United States attend the regional chiefs of defense conference in Kabul, Afghanistan.

STAFF SGT. DANA FLAMER/U.S. AIR FORCE



Qatari Special Forces Receive Artillery Training

UNIPATH STAFF

Soldiers with Qatar Joint Special Forces (QJSF) completed training in January 2018 on how to incorporate artillery and air power into their missions to defeat numerically larger opponents.

Thirteen officers and enlisted men with QJSF took part in the Fire Support Subject Matter Expert Exchange with the U.S. Army 75th Field Artillery Brigade. The exchange included three days of classroom instruction followed by a live-fire demonstration that was part of the Qatar Emiri Land Forces Field Artillery Advanced Course.

Day one involved discussions on the advantages and disadvantages of using artillery, mortar and air support in Special Forces operations. One of the many advantages is supporting fire allows small combat teams to engage numerically stronger forces.

Days two and three focused on map reading, targeting and fire adjustments. Instructors from the 75th Field Artillery Brigade used practical exercises to engage students, who received praise for their high level of professionalism and understanding of course material. Classroom instruction concluded with attendance at a previously scheduled live-fire demonstration in which Qatari Soldiers earned certification to command field artillery batteries.

QJSP plans additional training with its U.S. partners to focus more specifically on air support.

During the same period, the 75th Field Artillery Brigade conducted similar exchanges with Jordanian and Omani troops in their respective home countries.

Source: 75th Field Artillery Brigade



Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan Improve Relations

SALTANAT BERDIKEEVA

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan began a new chapter in their relations after holding discussions to boost trade and military cooperation.

The two neighbors signed a road map on cooperation in December 2017 that covers foreign trade, customs, tax administration, crime fighting, transportation and other areas of cooperation. The agreement also removed stringent border controls that led to long queues and traffic.

During an official meeting between the leaders of both countries, Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbayev stressed that neither country has unresolvable problems. According to Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan is one of Kyrgyzstan's main partners and investors, and more than 700 Kyrgyz businesses operate in Kazakhstan.

Visiting a checkpoint on the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border in February 2018, newly elected Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov urged border guards to be friendly to people crossing the border, emphasizing the importance of brotherly relations between the two countries.

Furthermore, Kazakh and Kyrgyz defense ministries held talks on military and technical cooperation in February 2018. For example, Kazakhstan offered multipurpose helicopters to the Kyrgyz Ministry of Emergency Situations.

Kazakhstan also suggested cooperation in the shared use of communications satellites to detect and address natural disasters and other emergencies in Kyrgyzstan. Kazakhstan's satellites provide communication and broadcasting services throughout Central Asia.

Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbayev, right, and Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov meet in Astana, Kazakhstan, in December 2017.

REUTERS

Sources: 24.kg, Kapital.kz, Informburo.kz, K-news.kg, bnews.kz



Omani Army Trains with U.S. Partners

UNIPATH STAFF

Omani and U.S. Army troops successfully launched a simulated attack on Oman's southern coast in January 2018 in what is expected to be part of a series of bilateral exercises between the two countries.

Exercise Inferno Creek 18 engaged Soldiers for three weeks as scouts, engineers, infantry units and mortar teams. Participants came from the 11th Omani Brigade, Royal Army of Oman, and the U.S. 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

"Inferno Creek 2018 is an opportunity for the U.S. and our partner, the Omanis, to bridge a gap and build a relationship here in the Middle East and to develop ourselves at the company and tactical level," said Lt. Col. Jonathan Genge, the U.S. task force commander.

The climax of the joint training was an Omani-U.S. assault on an enemy compound. Engineers from both

armies breached defensive wire using Bangalor torpedoes — explosive tubes used for clearing battlefield obstacles — allowing infantry units to maneuver through the gap.

An Omani rocket-propelled grenade team disabled a simulated T-72 tank attempting to reoccupy the compound. U.S. Army Cpl. Jacob Kehler said both armies took pains to ensure they worked together despite obvious differences.

"Coordination between all units really has to be on point, it really tests how well you can conduct everything going on, how proficient you are at communication between the units," he said.

Lt. Col. Genge noted that Inferno Creek 2018 was the largest iteration of the annual exercise and expressed his wish that it would grow larger in the years ahead.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense



U.S. and Omani Soldiers train during Inferno Creek 18.

STAFF SGT. JENNIFER MILNES/U.S. ARMY

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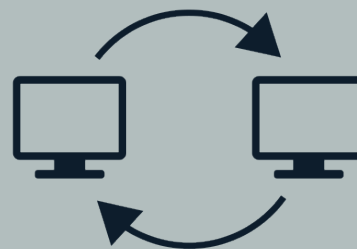


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