

**Regional Marines
Meet in Abu Dhabi**

**Jordan Combats
Extremist Ideology**

**Central Asia Curbs
Terror Recruitment**

UNIPATH



**The Online
Threat**



A member of Al Qannas Al Masry releases a falcon on World Falconry Day in Egypt's Borg al-Arab desert near Alexandria. REUTERS

Ruins of the tomb of Bibi Maryam in Qalhat, a city in Oman that flourished in the Middle Ages. UNESCO added the site to its World Heritage List in 2018.

APP/GETTY IMAGES



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Ideological warfare and information operations are critical to defeating terrorists who lurk online.

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UNIPATH

The Battle of Information

Volume 9, Number 1



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Gen. Kenneth McKenzie Jr.
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KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE

Terrorist organizations thrive in a fragile environment plagued by societal neglect and poor services. Populations lose trust in government and become susceptible to extremist ideology, which promises to rectify injustice and reduce their suffering. Extremists work to promote discontent against the state, stir up ethnic and sectarian strife and highlight injustice and marginalization. This makes it easier to recruit youths to join terrorist movements.

Jordan was one of the first countries to join the fight against extremism. His Majesty King Abdullah II first publicized the Amman Message in 2005, which affirmed the fundamental values of Islam: mercy, mutual respect, tolerance, acceptance and freedom of religion. The Amman Message exposed lies of the extremists and provided a clear picture of Islam free of the distortions of extremists who claim to be Muslims.

In some cases, the extremists have made common cause with other malign actors, despite their contradictory objectives, but their mutual goal is to sow sedition and conflict among Muslims by spreading lies and misinterpreting religious texts.

We must focus on the true principles of religion and recognize that non-Muslim communities have lived in peace and security among Muslims since the dawn of Islam. We have churches and temples where our brothers practice their religion freely. Muslims did not destroy the churches, but respected and preserved them. Why, after 1,400 years, are extremists trying to demolish houses of worship and displace innocent citizens?

Terrorist threats have changed the traditional pattern of war and have exposed armies to the new challenge of hybrid warfare. One front of the war has shifted from battlefields to confrontations on social networking sites. Here, shady figures preach a violent ideology to seduce young people, and security forces respond with messages of their own to immunize potential recruits from the malign messaging of extremists.

The world was caught by surprise by the emergence of Daesh as a major player on social media. Its poisonous media machine deceived people with calls for "jihad" and "migration." It deceived thousands of young people to join, despite the well-publicized crimes and atrocities carried out by its gangs.

Nevertheless, we in the Ifta Department of the Jordan Armed Forces have been on the front lines since the beginning of this ideological war. The Ifta



Department is the highest religious authority in the Jordan Armed Forces. We began to expose terrorist lies on various platforms, media channels and social networking pages. We have also educated clerics and imams to specialize in countering radical thought.

Despite a massive media campaign to counter terrorists, most of these campaigns did not achieve their desired goals and sometimes made things worse. The issue is not the quantity of media messages, but the quality of their content and the strength of their arguments. We need qualified people armed with the right educa-

tion in Islamic studies that enable them to expose terrorist deceptions based on cherry picking texts and distorting their meanings. The terrorist practice of amputating religious texts or selecting passages out of context is a great challenge that cannot be faced by nonspecialists.

It should be noted that the target audience of extremists has special characteristics that differ from the rest of society. Most of this audience prefers to go to mosques, listen to Friday sermons and practice religious rites as stated in the hadith. Therefore, counterterrorism messaging on regular media outlets often doesn't reach these young people.

The Ifta Department has conducted extensive research on this phenomenon of extremism and has trained mosque imams to combat extremist thought and detect signs of radicalization early. By spreading the message of moderation and tolerance, we were able to protect our youth from slipping into extremism. We have also exposed the lies and allegations of extremists in social media and have reduced their footprint in cyberspace.

Technological development has made the world a small village and has helped people to appreciate other cultures. At the same time, the security threat has become greater because of the activity of extremists on social networking sites. Therefore, extremist ideology must be refuted on this important front, and young people must be immunized to resist toxic ideas.

This is a major responsibility for the clerics and imams of mosques all over the world, because extremism and terrorism are transnational and no one is safe from them. We must unite our efforts to combat extremist ideas, share intelligence and benefit from the experiences of friendly countries. I would like to emphasise that extremism is not limited to a specific religion, sect or gender. All ideologies have extremist individuals.

Brig. Gen. Dr. Majed Aldwarsha
Mufti of the Jordan Armed Forces

CORRECTING RELIGIOUS MISCONCEPTIONS

UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION



The Jordan Armed Forces has developed a cutting-edge counterextremism curriculum

UNIPATH STAFF

Three indispensable factors are necessary to defeat terrorism: a professional army skilled in fighting, an accurate intelligence apparatus, and experts who can diagnose the extremist thinking that feeds terrorism.

The strongest armies in the world cannot defeat terrorism with just battle tanks and aircraft, because terrorism will rise again wherever it finds another security gap. However, when terrorist forces are destroyed, sleeper cells and financiers are traced by intelligence agencies and religious men denounce the lies of terrorists and prevent society from falling into

the trap of extremist thought, then real victory be accomplished.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was among the first states to enact an anti-extremist ideology program under the guidance of the Jordan Armed Forces' Fatwa Department, implemented by the Prince Hassan College for Islamic Studies.

Brig. Gen. Dr. Majed Aldwarsha, mufti of the Jordan Armed Forces, wrote *Unipath* to explain the strategic use of this important program. Joining him were Brig. Gen. Dr. Ibrahim Abu Eqab, dean of Prince Hassan College, and the college's team of counterterrorism experts.

UNIPATH: Describe the counterextremism program.

Brig. Gen. Dr. Ibrahim Abu Eqab: First, extremist thought is fought only with correct thought. The best way to prevent extremist thought is to bolster correct thought in advance. From the beginning, we in the Ifta Department have worked hard to spread moderate Islamic thought. However, after the barbaric terrorist attacks against the innocent and the seduction of youths in the name of religion, and after the release of the Amman Message — which was a look to the future by our wise Hashemite leadership in 2004, warning of the dangers of extremism and urging a moderate path to reveal true Islam — our program received general acceptance and became the overall message of His Majesty the king in response to all such events.

In 2006, a book was published by the Ifta Department on how to approach the problem of extremism. I assure you that we are the first official military institution to write about this subject. We released a book about extremism and drew up counterextremist-thought courses that countered extremism through persuasion and evidence. We not only speak about the phenomenon, but we also diagnose it and provide the cure by examining concepts that form the basis of the erroneous philosophy of extremists. The most prominent issues are jihad and takfir and the related subjects of allegiance and disavowal. We make sure to examine these issues in this course in an academic way, and the materials are prepared by proficient and specialist professors.

For example, today's lecturer is Professor Mohammed Alkufhi, who will speak about Sharia policy and its impact on counterextremist thought (citizenship as a model). This subject was part of his doctoral thesis. My doctoral thesis was about jihad, and I have delivered lectures about the subject. Sheikh Ra'ad Bani Khalaf wrote about the Prophet's hadith and how misunderstanding it leads to extremism. Dr. Amer wrote about the creed and the thought of the khwaraj. He is a specialist on this subject. The duration of this course is two weeks, and we offer a package of relevant topics. The course has been successful, thank God, and the students give it positive reviews. I heard one of them saying that "we did not understand these topics until we took that course." That person works in the Islamic judiciary, where extremists are tried. This is proof

that the issues we approach through the course are complicated and that the average person cannot understand them by themselves. This is because they are not educational issues — they are specialized ones.

We thank God for the feedback we have received from our Saudi brothers who attended this course, saying that it was of great benefit. In the previous course, we had two brigadier generals from Saudi Arabia. We will continue to offer this successful program.

UNIPATH: Extremists cherry-pick legal opinions from imams. The hadith and stories they cite differ from those used by Muslims in general. How do you manage dialogue with extremists whose religious and historical references are incorrect?

Dr. Amer Alrajoub: I quote the verse of God, "And thus we have made you a just community" (Al Baqarah: 143). Islam is a moderate religion, and extremists have strayed so far from understanding religion that they declare Muslims to be disbelievers and kill innocent people. They may depend on texts that are shared by moderates, but the problem lies in their misunderstanding of these texts. They may take the superficial meaning and apply it to all Muslims. An example from the alhakimya verses (Dominion of Allah) is the verse, "And whoever does not judge by what God has revealed — then it is those who are the disbelievers" (Al Maidah: 44). If we use the superficial meaning of this verse, we can say that every person who does not judge by the Sharia regulations of God is a disbeliever. That is what the extremists did. This was how they allowed the blood of innocents to be shed. This is due to ignorance in interpreting Sharia texts. These texts are not to be taken separately. Extremists also depend on cutting texts from Islamic books to give them another meaning. Take the verse, "So woe to the worshippers" (Al-Maun: 4). It gives a different meaning if it is read without the later verse, "Who are neglectful of their prayers" (Al-Maun: 5). They also selectively edited a text to justify killings and bombings and then attributed that text to a jurist. They use modern technologies to make movies and dub voices and introduce them as a saying by a well-known jurist. Their leaders deceive them. The biggest problem is the absence of awareness and knowledge among their followers. Thus, such thoughts must be fought by thought. Thank God, the dialogue fostered by specialists in Jordanian jails is

fruitful, and many extremists there have returned to the right path.

UNIPATH: However, when you debate an extremist and mention the nonextremist rulings of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, he will reply: “But Ibn Taimiah said otherwise.” That is, he prefers the words of a sheikh born centuries after those Caliphs.

Dr. Amer Alrajoub: The answer here lies in the reference of *ummah* (the whole Muslim community). We have four jurists from whom to take regulations. In addition, we take instruction from people known for their knowledge and effort (*mujtahid*). We cannot say that Ibn Taimiah is an absolute *mujtahid* in this matter. Of course, he furthered knowledge in some matters, but he lived under different circumstances, and we cannot use him as a reference. Therefore, our reference is the four jurists. The problem of extremists is that they do not refer to the Rightly Guided Caliphs. In addition, there is a large time gap between these Caliphs and Ibn Taimiah. Ibn Taimiah lived in different and exceptional circumstances. Thus, we cannot take fatwas or texts from Ibn Taimiah and apply them to our time. That is what extremists do. They select the fatwa tied to certain circumstances and a certain time to justify their crimes.

Brig. Gen. Dr. Ibrahim Abu Eqab: Everyone who has a question should go to a specialist. God creates specialists for every religious and scientific subject. The big mistake these people make is that they have not specialized in Sharia studies. They may even not have any Sharia qualifications. We feel sorry for people who are deceived by their opinions. God said in the Quran, “So ask the people of the message if you do not know” (Alanibia: 7). People in one specialization seek advice from those in other specializations. It is not reasonable for a sick person to go to a jurist to cure him. He will go to a physician. Likewise, a physician in need of a Sharia opinion will go to a religious jurist. If this matter is resolved, many extremists will leave extremism, which they adopted because of misunderstanding. It is proven that the most important reason for extremism is misunderstanding, not circumstances. Ifta without knowledge is the most dangerous thing when it comes to extremism.

UNIPATH: Many extremists are recruited inside jails. How can you inoculate prisoners against extremist thought?

Sheikh Ra’ad Bani Khalaf: Most people who enter jail are not qualified to interpret Sharia. Thus, they must be protected against extremist thoughts. This is what our security agencies do through separation and classification of prisoners. Every category has a different place to sleep and live. The advice and dialogue committee specializing in extremist ideology visits prisoners. If an extremist is convinced of the opinion of the committee, he is transferred to another place to avoid harm at the hands of extremists in the same jail. In this way, thank God, the committee managed to convince many extremists to abandon takfir thoughts after the committee showed them the right path, knowing that some had high status among extremists. Now, they have discovered the difference between that way and the right path.

Brig. Gen. Dr. Ibrahim Abu Eqab: This is a problem that needs to be solved. I do not know the condition of jails outside Jordan, but in Jordan jails need to be managed, because if extremists are put in the same place, they learn from one another. Special care should be given to classifying them accurately, and everyone should be engaged with appropriate discussions. If they are left together, I expect it would be dangerous for others. This is a diagnosed problem and there have been attempts to solve this, but no comprehensive solution has been found. Condemned extremists who return to the right path and reject extremism are granted a special royal pardon. This is a powerful incentive to encourage the rest to think seriously about leaving extremism.

UNIPATH: What are the goals of the counter-extremism program, and what does it offer students from other Arab states?

Dr. Amer Alrajoub: One of the important goals of this course is presenting a variety of topics and not approaching them as a single issue. Another thing is that this course and its topics were put together by specialized jurists. We have been fortunate to select external lecturers from the universities of the kingdom, the military judiciary, and the general Ifta Department. This means that it is

“It is proven that the most important reason for extremism is misunderstanding, not circumstances. Ifta without knowledge is the most dangerous thing when it comes to extremism.”

~ Brig. Gen. Dr. Ibrahim Abu Eqab

not a purely religious approach. It is integrated and approaches the matter from all religious, judicial and security aspects. Lecturers provide a realistic image about what happens to them. For example, our brothers in security departments give us a realistic image about what happens in their departments. There are targeted classes in this course for persons working with extremists in security or judicial departments. We have a section for assessing the course at the end in a questionnaire to evaluate how effective the course has been in accomplishing its goals. We develop the curricula for each course based on the proposals gathered from the previous course.

UNIPATH: How do graduates use what they have learned in the course of their daily work?

Dr. Mohammed Alkufhi: For example, we give our brothers in the security departments theological information they can use to identify and dissuade extremists. Attending this course gives trainees a lot of information that can be used in their particular department. Another thing is that our Saudi brothers have appreciated this course, and the commander of the Saudi Land Forces has described its positive impact. For example, in the previous course, we had four trainees from Saudi Arabia. In the present course, we have seven. This is a positive indicator of the success of the program and proof that it is appreciated in other Arab countries. Not only do security departments and Arab countries benefit from the course, but we also have imams from the armed forces who play an important role in

their military units in providing a good model in the workplace. This course may help them identify persons at risk of becoming extremists and help them manage this early.

UNIPATH: After Daesh took control of cities in Iraq and Syria, inhabitants were brainwashed. What can military imams do to prevent Daesh from reappearing under a different name?

Brig. Gen. Dr. Ibrahim Abu Eqab:

I believe that extremism is a matter of thought. This means that it starts and ends with thought. The best weapon to counter extremism in most countries of the world is to protect thought. This is because a correct understanding convinces people. Otherwise I cannot convince even the closest people to me if they misunderstand the texts. However, if I can attain a correct conception of religion, especially regarding cases that inspire extremists, I will have achieved some success. I think these courses are part of the cure for extremism. Awareness and prevention is an important part of this cure. Scholars in these states should fill the gaps by spreading forgiveness, by protecting society, and by correcting wrong concepts. Extremism is a social phenomenon that is not confined to Islam. Every human being, regardless of his beliefs, may be prey to extremism and the exclusion of others. There are historical examples of violence by non-Muslim extremists. Our job as imams and sources of guidance is to explain the correct interpretation of Islam. If you can accomplish this goal, extremism will vanish eventually.

Dr. Mohammed Alkufhi: With regard to inhabitants who were subject to brainwashing, I believe that the most trusted persons in society are mosque imams and schoolteachers. This is especially true because the targeted group is youth. We know that Daesh recruited young children to commit killings. You cannot protect the thought of such kids, and you cannot provide them Sharia evidence — they do not understand such matters. They do not have the ability to debate. If this matter is not managed by mosque imams and schoolteachers, killing will be a natural thing for these kids.

UNIPATH: Societal dissatisfaction can be exploited by extremists promising to relieve oppression. What is the cure for this?

Brig. Gen. Dr. Ibrahim Abu Eqab: The cure is what we have in Jordan. All citizens are equal before the law. There is religious freedom and peaceful coexistence. We do not have a problem like that, thank God. This principle is well-established in Jordanian society, law and constitution. Our leaders foresaw the future on this matter. The situation here in Jordan did not happen arbitrarily. It occurred through laws. I think that other countries should follow Jordan with regards to religious coexistence and tolerance since such countries have a social makeup similar to Jordanian society.

Dr. Amer Alrajoub: Of course, prevention is better than cure. The cause should be diagnosed before the disease spreads to the vital organs of the nation. When the king launched the Amman Message, it was a vision of the future for the region involving coexistence and religious tolerance. It was about love and familiarity between people. It was a message of peace between religions launched by the king that was widely accepted. This is prevention against a dangerous disease. We here in Jordan live in peace, brotherhood, and coexistence. There is even marriage between Muslims and Christians and Muslims and Jews. As I said, in this matter, prevention is better than cure. The process is common among all people all over the world. Each person has a role to play. The home, the workplace, the society, leaders and the media. Even social media plays a major positive and negative role in extremism. I mean, extremists use social media to promote their ideology and seduce youth, while society uses it

to dispel the lies of extremists. We have a problem facing society that needs the effort of all members of society.

Brig. Gen. Dr. Ibrahim Abu Eqab: You said that oppression found in society helped extremism to insinuate itself into society. I look at this from another perspective. The first cure for the problem of extremism is knowledge and awareness, a balanced and a correct view of verses of the Quran and the hadith. If a person has a clear understanding of religion, he will not go as far as the extremists did. We should also speak about the economic factor and its impact on the deviation to extremism. Oppression and poverty have an influence but the fix is correct knowledge and awareness. *Sahaba* (the companions of the Prophet) experienced oppression and persecution owing to their religion. They, too, had difficult economic circumstances. However, none of them became an extremist. Why? Because they had knowledge and a correct understanding of religion.

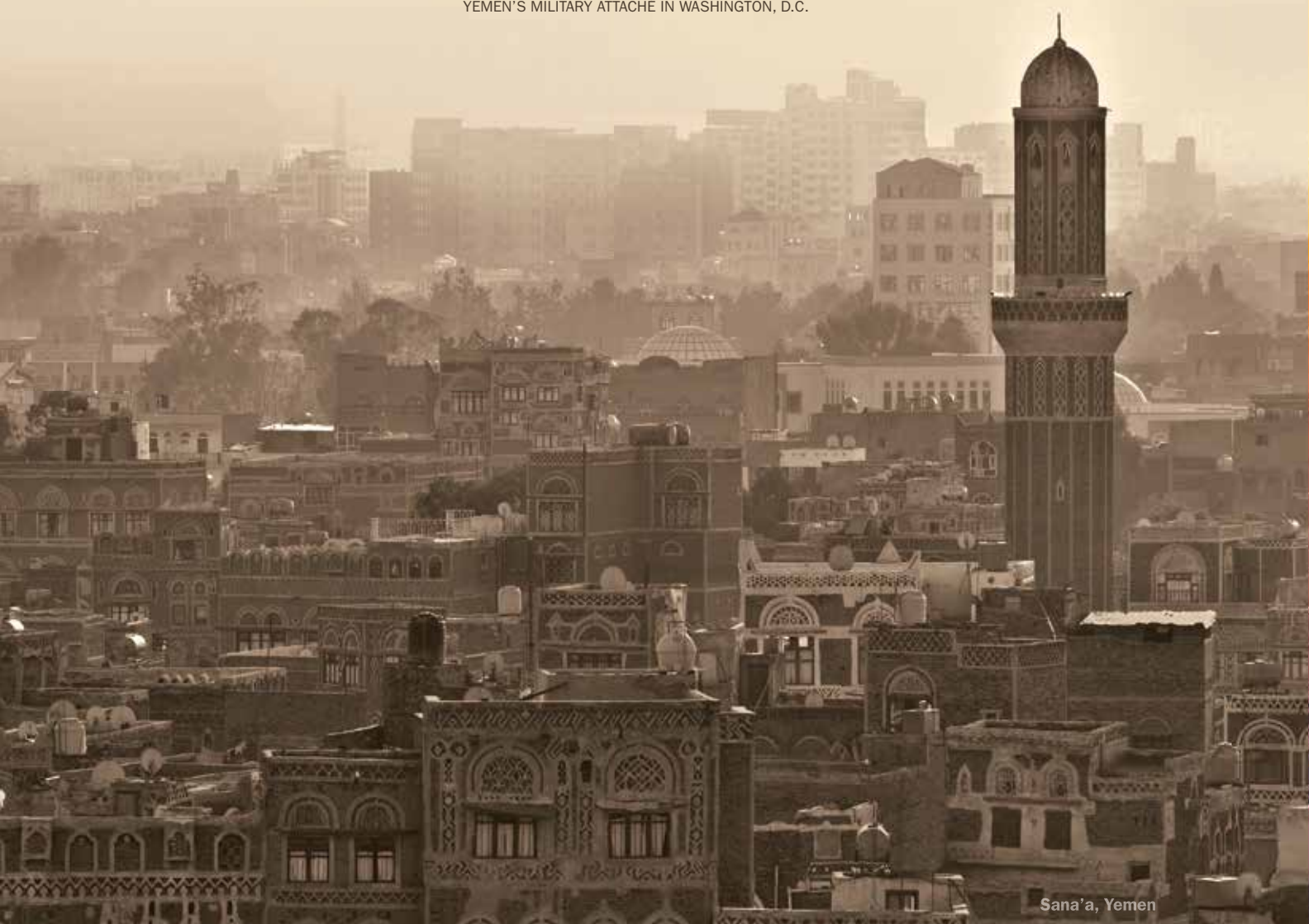
Dr. Mohammed Alkufhi: As an example from Islamic history, Imam Ahmad, may God rest his soul, faced great oppression during the reign of Alma'moun Alabassi. When someone said to him, "Why did you not incite the people against the Caliph?" although he had been whipped, he refused to incite the people against the state. He put the interests of community above his private interests because he was a man of awareness and knew the repercussions of inciting the street. He preferred to be insulted than to shed blood and encourage extremism. In fact, religious understanding and protection are the pillars of everything.

Sheikh Ra'ad Bani Khalaf: The focus should be on the values of citizenship. In this way, no group or division will feel excluded or underappreciated. Citizenship calls for equality among all citizens regardless of ethnicity or sect. All persons are equal before the law. His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein confirms that the Jordanian Constitution provides that all Jordanian citizens are equal before the law, regardless of race, doctrine or religion differences. I think that confirming and establishing the values of citizenship are key to eliminating oppression. ♦

IRANIAN INTERFERENCE IN YEMEN

**TEHRAN PUSHES ITS RADICAL POLITICAL AND
IDEOLOGICAL AGENDA IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

MAJ. GEN. MOHAMMED ZAYED MAHMOUD IBRAHIM
YEMEN'S MILITARY ATTACHÉ IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



Sana'a, Yemen

Iran, formerly known as Persia, today is called the Islamic Republic of Iran, with Tehran as its capital. Its system of government is based on the supreme leader, considered to be the highest authority in the state and the decision-maker. The nation has adopted the “Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist,” a modern political theory that allows clerics to govern in Iran. The Iranian constitution, issued in 1979, gives the supreme leader broad powers, with the most important being: defining the general policies for governing, leading the armed forces, declaring war and initiating change. The leader also has the right to dismiss the president of the republic as well as the leaders of the Guardian Council and the head of the judiciary.

Religious wishes and desires, as well as historical ambitions, are intertwined in the process of formulating and defining the path of Iran’s ideological agenda regarding Yemen.

Much has been written and presented about Iranian intervention in Yemen. This emerged in October 2012, when Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi accused Iran of attempting to implement a plan to control the Bab el-Mandeb strait leading to the Red Sea. He called for urgent international action to curb these plans.

On September 28, 2012, President Hadi spoke at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., saying that one of the threats facing Yemen was Iran’s blatant interference. He stressed that, with the seeming collapse of the regime in Syria, Iran was attempting to compensate for those losses by making Yemen a strategic option since it lies between the Arabian Gulf oil states and the Horn of Africa.

The Yemeni president explained that these interventions manifested themselves in Iran’s support for some political groups as well as some of the armed militias, alongside recruiting and implanting networks of spies. The president described the existence of six espionage networks working for Iran, all of which have been referred to the judiciary in Yemen.

At the same time, Yemen’s minister for foreign affairs warned about the extent of Iran’s interference in Yemen’s internal affairs.

On the sidelines of a December 2012 security conference in Bahrain, Dr. Ali al-Ahmadi, then head of Yemen’s National Security Service, said that Iran seized the opportunity to expand the conflict. He affirmed that evidence of Iranian subversive elements exists, as well as evidence of their intervention.

Observers believe Iran’s support of the Houthi rebels, who have been fighting the Yemeni government since the 1990s, is the most significant factor in Iran’s attempt to expand its influence in Yemen.



**Maj. Gen.
Mohammed Zayed
Mahmoud Ibrahim**

Iran has extended media and political support for the Houthis. It has provided the militias with weapons, either by smuggling them to Saada or by providing financial support to purchase weapons in Yemen.

Intelligence reports say Iran has established a base in Eritrea to supply the Houthi militias with weapons. Supplies are made by boat to the western districts of Yemen through small Yemeni ports such as Medi and Al Luhayyah, which are near Saada.

Numerous news stories report that Iranian ships in the Gulf of Aden, under the guise of fighting terrorism and piracy, are using Yemeni fishing boats to smuggle weapons into Yemen.

The reality is that there are many and varied methods of smuggling weapons, and there is ample evidence confirming this criminal activity. Examples include the seized ships Jihan 1 and Jihan 2, the transfer of missiles and rockets to the Houthis and the presence of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Iranian-sponsored trainers.

It is notable that the firing of one of the missiles was mentioned by Ambassador Nikki Haley, then U.S. representative to the United Nations Security Council.

Between 2011 and 2012, Iran expanded its field of political communications with Houthi rebels and other political figures in Yemen. Additionally, the area of arms shipments expanded as part of what was defined by intelligence officials as an Iranian effort to expand its influence in the Middle East.

Iran continued to send materials and equipment to manufacture high-explosive armour-piercing weapons. They were sent to some Yemeni businessmen associated with the Houthi rebels before the Yemeni government could intercept them.

Under cover of revolution, the Houthis were able to attract tribal support. This resulted in a split among the revolutionaries, between those supporting the Gulf initiative and others rejecting it on the basis of their subordination to Iran and the Iranian outlook that prevails in the reactionary and bloodthirsty regime in Tehran.

Iran has reaffirmed its support for its Houthi ally in Yemen and refused to discuss disarmament of its other ally in Lebanon, Hezbollah.

In conclusion, Iran has three strategic aims that define Tehran’s needs in Yemen: controlling the Bab el-Mandeb strait, expanding its ideological influence and threatening the security of Arab nations.

We conclude that Iran has had an interest in Yemen for years, perhaps as far back as the 1990s, when the leader of the Houthis was indoctrinated in Iran.

Since then, Yemen has ranked high among the priorities of Iranian political thinking, because its location allows Iran to achieve all three strategies outlined above, for which the decision-makers in the upper echelons of Iranian leader Ali Khamenei’s government have long planned. ♦



TERROR

by **TWEET**

DR. MARLEEN HORMIZ, ISRA' UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

An analysis of Daesh's exploitation of social media to spread its malign message

Daesh has transformed Twitter into its electronic province. It orders its followers and supporters to post on the site to bolster the organization, recruit new members and collect donations. The organization set up a "bank of accounts" on Twitter to hand out new accounts to supporters whose accounts are shut down to ensure that they can quickly get back to posting on Twitter. It ordered its supporters to use hashtags in their tweets, which they did intensively, and the organization's psychological warfare on Twitter became a "hashtag war."

Daesh also set up a "hacking division," a group of hackers that breaches important global websites. To give just a couple

of examples, the division posted documents containing dozens of names, addresses and phone numbers that it claimed were for Saudi intelligence officers. It also threatened to hack into White House sites and other accounts in the United States.

These terrorists established something called the Granddaughters of Aisha Foundation, women who make multimedia posts featuring news written and published on the websites of the Daesh and the Amaq News Agency. These posts are linked by audio to Al-Bayan Radio's posts, digital photos and video clips of suicide or sleeper operations, or clips of newly released videos.

The Granddaughters of Aisha have played a major role in luring new recruits and posting instructions for people who decide to immigrate to territory occupied by the organization, complete with information about what they need to do at each step of the trip. It also provides electronic advice on how to protect accounts from hacking. On top of this are techniques for making explosives, plus running accounts with the mission of identifying various types of weapons and combat methods and converting certain civilian vehicles for military use.

Daesh has also focused on a strategy of repetition in posting tweets to ensure that tweets are not deleted. This involves the following:

- Repeated posting of the same content several times over short or long periods.
- Repeated posting of the same content among groups of Daesh accounts.
- Repetition of the same content in several forms in a single tweet (text, photo, video).
- Repeated posting of the same video and audio files at more than one link.
- Using special technology or systems that post online automatically, such as posting 13 tweets at once every 30 seconds.

Through examination of eight active pro-Daesh accounts (Kawaser Al-Nashr, Ajnad Al-Osrah, Kasshaf, Al-Noemi ibn Al-Ramadi, Abu Othman Al-Qannas, Abu Ibada Al-Ansari, Hawwaa Brayef, Abu Isdar), 2,380 tweets were analyzed between February 10, 2016, and May 10, 2016. The tweets included an array of journalism, as shown in the table below:

No.	Content added to tweets	Quantity
1	News (reports and summaries)	130
2	Written news bulletins	23
3	Video/Photo reports (text used only to introduce report)	56
4	Articles	4
Total		213

The following tables show the psychological warfare methods apparent in the content analysis of tweets posted by the eight accounts named above during a three-month period:

ELICITING RELIGIOUS SYMPATHY

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Expressions exclaiming and praising God	230	34.23%
2	Prayers: a) Prayers for Daesh victory (111 instances) b) Prayers for the defeat of Daesh's "enemies" (56 instances)	167	24.85%
3	Religious texts and sayings	79	11.76%
4	Empowerment	61	9.08%
5	Compliance with the dictates of Islamic law	48	7.14%
6	Bestowing honorifics	46	6.84%
7	Islam's religious and territorial unity	35	5.20%
8	Implementing ruling of execution of spies	4	0.60%
9	Organizing religious competitions	2	0.30%
Total		672	100%

BELITTLING, INSULTING AND MOCKING OPPONENTS

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Mockery	218	49.77%
2	Belittling the Iraqi Army and security forces	149	34.02%
3	Highlighting the weakness of the Iraqi government	34	7.76%
4	Making accusations of treason	34	7.76%
5	Sowing doubts about the Iraqi media	3	0.69%
Total		438	100%

VULNERABILITY AND SEEKING SYMPATHY

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Exaggerating the war	34	41.98%
2	Highlighting bombing of civilian targets	22	27.16%
3	Accusations of sectarianism	19	23.46%
4	Highlighting damage and the siege	6	7.40%
Total		81	100%

ENTREATIES AND SHARPENING ZEAL

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Boosting morale	87	65.91%
2	Releasing books, bulletins and printed material	37	28.03%
3	Publishing inciting oratory	8	6.06%
Total		132	100%

STEREOTYPING AND PROFILING

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Emphasizing constancy of the "caliphate"	67	45.89%
2	Heroic qualities possessed by Daesh fighters	50	34.25%
3	Daesh as champion of Islam and Sunnis	25	17.12%
4	Emphasizing fighters' equipment and materiel readiness to confront adversaries	4	2.74%
Total		146	100%

NAMING AND TERMING

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Giving names to the enemy (adversary)	456	78.22%
2	Giving names to supporters	127	21.78%
Total		583	100%

LISTING ENEMIES

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Listing enemies -- the Shite community	48	52.75%
2	Listing enemies -- the United States	24	26.37%
3	Listing enemies -- intellectual and religious opponents	19	20.88%
Total		91	100%

DISCREDITING

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Disputing information about poor living conditions in areas controlled by Daesh	26	50%
2	Disputing information about the organization's loss of territory it previously controlled	20	38.46%
3	Disputing information about Daesh's acts of violence against civilians	6	11.54%
Total		52	100%

ELECTRONIC RECRUITMENT

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Calls for holy war	33	58.93%
2	Calls to emigrate and join the organization	23	41.07%
Total		56	100%

AGGRANDIZING AND EXAGGERATING MILITARY CAPABILITIES

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Publishing news about explosions, shelling and ambushes	250	38.40%
2	Posting live coverage of clashes	136	20.90%
3	Publicizing military capabilities and combat skills	131	20.12%
4	Revealing attacks by "sleeper agents"	100	15.36%
5	Promoting the organization's ability to bring down aircraft	19	2.92%
6	Capturing weapons and prisoners	12	1.84%
7	Holding training sessions	3	0.46%
Total		651	100%

PROVOKING FEAR THROUGH VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Threatening or carrying out violence and killing	79	48.47%
2	Calls to commit violence, promoting violence, and teaching how to make explosives	52	31.90%
3	Targeting infrastructure	15	9.20%
4	Threatening to open new fronts to counter the organization's supposed enemies	9	5.52%
5	Portraying operations carried out in Europe as invasions	8	4.91%
Total		163	100%

PROPAGANDIZING THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES

No.	Highlighting propaganda activities for the organization's provinces (wilayat)	Instances	Percentage
1	Propaganda office for Wilayat Al-Anbar	42	14.48%
2	Propaganda office for Wilayat Al-Furat	39	13.45 %
3	Propaganda office for Wilayat Kirkuk	31	10.69 %
4	Propaganda office for Wilayat Al-Janub	30	10.34 %
5	Propaganda office for Wilayat Salahuddin	28	9.66 %
6	Propaganda office for Wilayat Al-Fallujah	28	9.66 %
7	Propaganda office for Wilayat Dijla	28	9.66 %
8	Propaganda office for Wilayat Ninevah	27	9.31 %
9	Propaganda office for Wilayat Diyala	19	6.55 %
10	Propaganda office for Wilayat Al-Jazeera	9	3.10 %
11	Propaganda office for Wilayat Shamal Baghdad	5	1.72 %
12	Propaganda office for Wilayat Baghdad	4	1.38 %
Total		290	100%

USING TWITTER FOR “ELECTRONIC WAR”

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Requiring use of hashtags	1,485	51.96%
2	Supporting affiliated accounts after closure	998	34.92 %
3	Requirement to post on Twitter	260	9.10 %
4	Providing online advice	51	1.78 %
5	Organizing account-closing campaigns	28	0.98 %
6	Campaigns to establish new accounts on Twitter and promote Daesh accounts on other sites	20	0.70 %
7	Announcing the return of an account after closure	14	0.49 %
8	Account-hacking campaigns	2	0.07 %
Total		2,858	100%

REPETITION

No.	Subcategories	Instances	Percentage
1	Repeating news	192	42.38%
2	Repeating video/photo reports	127	28.3%
3	Repeating videos	51	11.26%
4	Repeating poster/pamphlet design	38	8.39 %
5	Repeating written news bulletins	24	5.30 %
6	Repeating articles	12	2.65%
7	Repeating audio news bulletins	9	1.99 %
Total		453	100%

CONCLUSIONS

Daesh used 13 propaganda and psychological warfare methods in its written content, including two new methods: electronic recruitment and promoting the organization’s civil activities. This confirms that the organization’s supporters include people proficient in psychological warfare. In addition, Daesh used electronic warfare to psychological effect with tools that became available with the emergence of the post-interactivity contact that characterizes Twitter.

Daesh’s psychological warfare on Twitter can be described as a “hashtag war” because it uses hashtags as one of the primary weapons, penetrating the most widely circulated hashtags regardless of topic. The terrorists’ psychological warfare on Twitter is notable for the use of multimedia content (text + sound + digital photos + video + infographics).

It worked to put together campaigns to support pro-Daesh accounts after their closure. It did this by providing new, ready-made accounts and promoting affiliated accounts following deletion, on top of organizing campaigns to report anti-Daesh accounts. The organization’s propaganda

wings also intensified the pursuit of electronic psychological warfare when subjected to military attacks on the ground. The organization focused on eliciting the audience’s religious sympathy and affecting them emotionally, seeking to win them over by exploiting religious feeling.

Based on the above conclusions, Daesh will remain active online after its loss of territory in Iraq and will use electronic and social media warfare to continue gaining supporters and to target important local and international institutions and infrastructure.

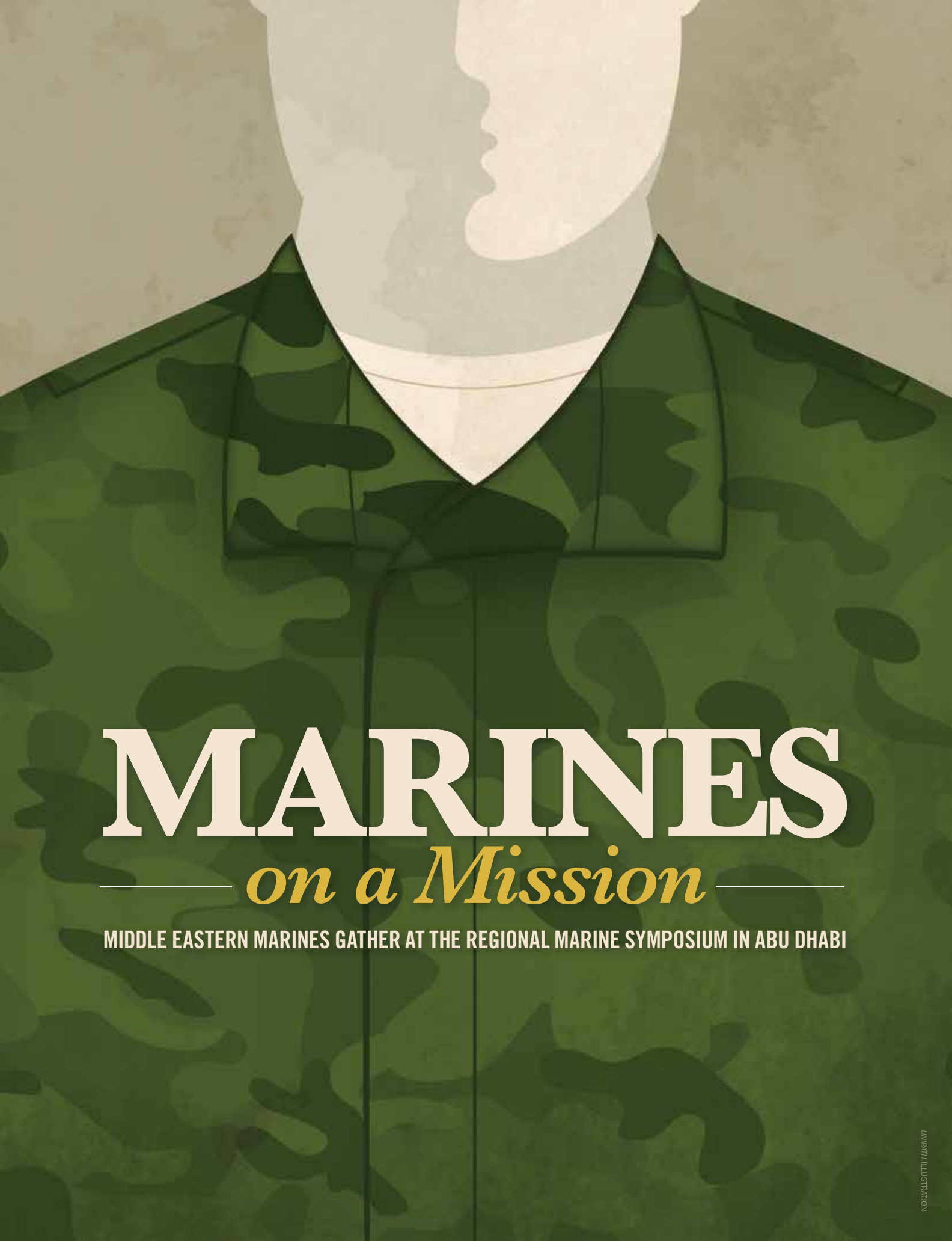
RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent terrorists from exploiting the nature of social media to spread extremist ideas and attract young people, Iraqi governmental and private academic and research institutions should hold annual conferences and regular seminars on electronic psychological warfare practiced by terrorist organizations. This would educate Iraqi society about the danger of this strategy and identify ways to combat it by publicizing conclusions and recommendations for educational, social and psychological institutions.

Furthermore, Iraqi security agencies concerned with psychological warfare should use academic studies and research to help organize psychological warfare resistance or offense campaigns. Work should be done to conduct psychological and sociological studies on the psychological and sociological impacts on Iraqis’ personalities in the areas that the organization controlled for three years, especially on children and adolescents, to provide instruction on ways to eliminate vestiges of the terrorist organization’s ideas from their minds.

Awareness campaigns should be aimed at children’s guardians to inform them of the danger of their children following content posted by Daesh on social media sites, especially Twitter. Considering that the organization will likely remain active online in broader, higher quality, and more intensive ways after its loss of territory, Iraqi security institutions specializing in psychological warfare should coordinate with similar Arab and international institutions so that they can learn from Iraq’s experience with Daesh’s psychological warfare, especially given that it blended traditional and electronic practices, and to spread those lessons internationally. The relevant state institutions should outline a proactive psychological warfare strategy and provide the tools and resources required to implement this strategy when the need arises. ♦

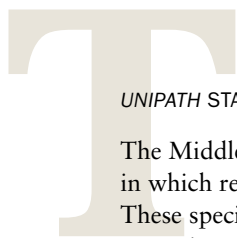
Daesh will remain active online after its loss of territory in Iraq and will use electronic and social media warfare to continue gaining supporters and to target important local and international institutions and infrastructure.



MARINES

on a Mission

MIDDLE EASTERN MARINES GATHER AT THE REGIONAL MARINE SYMPOSIUM IN ABU DHABI



UNIPATH STAFF

The Middle East offers no shortage of arenas in which regional marine forces are necessary. These specialized troops — traditionally adept at operations on both land and sea — have played a critical role in protecting strategic waterways stretching from the Arabian Gulf to the Red Sea to the Suez Canal.

Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping near Yemen, instability in Syria, drug and weapons smuggling, Somali-based piracy: All require regional marine forces committed to a high state of readiness.

With those common security challenges in mind, officers and noncommissioned officers from Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United States converged on Abu Dhabi, UAE, in August 2018 for the third annual Regional Marine Symposium.

The discussion topics included a full range of security threats, and each country had something unique to add to the symposium:

UAE

The United Arab Emirates Presidential Guard, which co-hosted the event with U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command (MARCENT), noted how its forces employ lessons learned from fighting in Yemen to improve its training.

Emirati officers described forces that initially lacked morale and endurance for a long fight and equipment that performed less than perfectly in Yemen's rough, mountainous terrain.

Complicating operations further, the Yemeni battlefields potentially included three different enemies: Iranian-sponsored Houthi, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and Daesh.

Lt. Col. Omar Al Mazraa remarked that his units feel an obligation to ensure Yemeni civilians are protected from the ravages of civil war.

"We are doing our best and making sure aid and support are being received by Yemeni civilians and not by other groups," Lt. Col. Al Mazraa said.



JORDAN

Jordanian Marines experienced growing pains of their own. Established in 2006 at the naval base of Aqaba, Jordan's 77th Royal Marine Battalion has been building proficiency, most recently under its new commander, Lt. Col. Mutasim Al-Rabie.

The battalion is gradually staffing and equipping a quick reaction force capable of responding almost instantly to crises and, in addition to its duties defending Jordan, hopes to supply manpower to United Nations peacekeeping forces overseas.

To improve performance, Lt. Col. Mutasim maintains an office to gather lessons learned from his troops, lessons ultimately shared with other branches of the Jordan Armed Forces.

"If we have 85 percent success, we focus on the 15 percent that went wrong," Lt. Col. Mutasim said.

OMAN

Cmdr. Talal Al Zaabi, a ship's captain in the Royal Navy of Oman, cited criminals as the most persistent threat to his country's 3,100-kilometer coastline, part of which commands the Strait of Hormuz.

Piracy, overfishing, illegal immigration and narcotics and weapons smuggling are among the top threats. As the closest wealthy country to Somalia, Oman suffered disproportionately from piracy during the peak of the problem from 2008 to 2011, Cmdr. Al Zaabi said.

The sultanate divides its coast into four defensive sectors, each with its own command center, ships, aircraft and special operations forces. But Oman regards the protection of Hormuz as a special case requiring broader military support.

"The Strait of Hormuz is not just Oman's responsibility. It's the responsibility of the whole world," Cmdr. Al Zaabi said.

LEBANON

Lebanon's Marines are independent of the nation's Navy and play a large role in protecting the



“LEBANON HAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE IN COMBATING EXTREMISTS COMING FROM SYRIA, AS WE SHARED OUR EXPERIENCE WITH ATTENDEES SO THAT THEY CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE LESSONS.”

— Capt. Ali Mazen of Lebanon



U.S. Marines and Sailors with Marine Corps Forces Central Command (MARCENT), Naval Amphibious Force, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade and partner nations pose for a group photo at the 2018 Regional Marine Symposium.

SGT. WESLEY TIMM/U.S. MARINE CORPS

country's 210-kilometer coast. Several years ago, when an Ethiopian Airlines plane crashed in the Mediterranean, it was Marines who retrieved the black box from the bottom of the sea.

Lebanon's Marines include a highly trained special forces unit modeled on the U.S. Navy's SEALs. When Daesh attempted to create an "emirate" in northern Lebanon in 2014, Marines helped crush the invasion.

In the future, Lebanon's Marines will be tasked with protecting future oil drilling platforms off the country's Mediterranean coast.

"Lebanon has a great experience in combating extremists coming from Syria, as we shared our experience with attendees so that they can take advantage of the lessons," said Capt. Ali Mazen of Lebanon. "We also hope to benefit from the experiences of countries involved in the fight against terrorism, smuggling and piracy."

SAUDI ARABIA

Bracketed by two of the world's most strategic waterways — the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea — Saudi Arabia's Royal Marines include two brigades of six companies each. One brigade is based at Western Fleet headquarters in Jeddah, the other at Eastern Fleet headquarters in Jubail.

Protecting the Saudi coastline and islands — and the Navy ships that patrol those waters — is the force's main mission.

"Our main task is to defend the kingdom's seacoasts," Saudi Royal Navy Staff Col. Bander Naser Almakhlifi said. "The ability to move and deploy rapidly is our defining responsibility."

Since the Royal Marines are a relatively new force — established in 1979 — they continue to train with partners such as Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan and the United States.

BAHRAIN

As a small island nation, Bahrain relies on partnerships to secure its coastline. The country's Armed Forces have welcomed assistance from Gulf Cooperation Council partners.

It also hosts ships from the United States, Great Britain and other coalition partners to respond to any trouble that emerges in the Arabian Gulf.

Bahrain has installed a new system that requires all vessels to identify themselves electronically to the Bahrain Coast Guard.

"We have a big problem with the smuggling of weapons to terrorist groups," Bahraini Maj. Nayaf Ibrahim Al-Khalifa said. "We use visit, board, search and seizure tactics not only for inspection but to deter smugglers and force them to keep their distance from our coastline."



FUTURE COOPERATION

There is no question about the U.S. commitment to its Middle Eastern partners, but the defeat of Daesh makes it likely that U.S. leaders will steer more military resources to the Pacific region, U.S. Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Matthew Trollinger told symposium participants.

That means Middle Eastern governments must increase cooperation and assume a greater share of the region's defense. It was a theme embraced further by MARCENT Commander Lt. Gen. Carl Mundy.

He praised the UAE for taking security into its own hands when it felt threatened by terrorists and rebels operating in Yemen. But he cautioned that Middle Eastern security depends on more than just military force.

He urged leaders from the region to focus equally on nonmilitary efforts — social, economic and religious — to lessen the appeal of violent extremist organizations. The U.S. will support its partners in this effort.

"We're trying to help you to solve your own problems," Gen. Mundy said. ♦

Bahraini Maj. Nayaf Ibrahim Al-Khalifa speaks to colleagues from Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the United States in Abu Dhabi.

SGT. WESLEY TIMM/U.S. MARINE CORPS



Oman's **CYBER SECURITY** Leadership

Oman's Arab Regional
Cybersecurity Centre is a leader
in protecting computer networks

UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION



○ UNIPATH STAFF ○

In the borderless realm of the internet, a cyber breach in one country can cause a cascading wave of damage across the world. Countries are working together to share tools, resources and best practices to protect networks and critical infrastructure and to ensure resilience if such a breach occurs.

To address the serious cyber threat, the Sultanate of Oman operates a regional center focused on enhancing regional cooperation, coordination and collaboration. The first of its kind, the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) Arab Regional Cybersecurity Centre is hosted by the Information Technology Authority (ITA) and managed by Oman's Computer Emergency Response Team.

Dr. Salim Sultan Al Ruzaiqi, chief executive officer of the Sultanate of Oman's ITA, recently spoke with *Unipath* to share some of the center's successes and milestones.

UNIPATH: It's been more than five years since the launch of the ITU's first Regional Cybersecurity Centre. Why did Oman decide to host this prestigious center?

DR. AL RUZAIQI: The Information Technology Authority of Oman leads the implementation of the digital Oman strategy with a vision of transforming the Sultanate of Oman into a sustainable knowledge society by leveraging information and communication technologies to enhance government services, enrich businesses and empower individuals.

Cyber security has been identified as a critical strategic pillar of Oman's digital strategy. International cooperation has been identified as a key component of this pillar. Such cooperation will significantly contribute to combating

cyber threats and enhancing the country's readiness to respond and manage cyber threats.

Hosting the regional center is aligned with the outcomes of the 2003 Geneva World Summit on the Information Society's Action Line 5 that focuses on building security and confidence in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Additionally, it has also addressed the goals of the ITU Arab Connect Summit held in 2012, where cyber security resolutions were issued to close cyber security gaps in the Arab world.

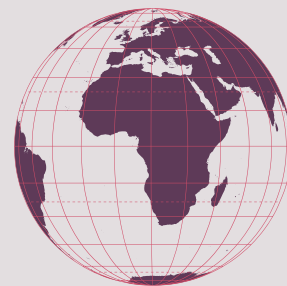
The establishment of the regional center will enable ITU member countries to benefit from the expertise and capabilities available at the center in Oman and contribute to achieving the cyber security goals of these summits.

UNIPATH: What are some of the center's most important accomplishments?

Regional Cybersecurity Centre's objectives:

- Drive the adoption of the ITU's Global Cybersecurity Agenda across the region.
- Assist/respond to the cyber security needs of the least-developed countries in the region.
- Serve as a management center and execution platform for regional cyber security objectives.
- Provide a consolidation center for ITU member states to manage regional cyber security programs and initiatives.
- Develop regional and national cyber security frameworks and policies through regional studies and workshops.

Regional Cybersecurity Centre ACHIEVEMENTS



26 Some of the Participating Countries

1. Algeria
2. Bahrain
3. Djibouti
4. Egypt
5. Iraq
6. Jordan
7. Kuwait
8. Lebanon
9. Libya
10. Mauritania
11. Morocco
12. Oman
13. Palestinian territories
14. Qatar
15. Saudi Arabia
16. Somalia
17. Sudan
18. Syria
19. Tunisia
20. United Arab Emirates



8,000+
Attendees



80
Scholarships
Awarded



DR. AL RUZAIQI: The regional center has delivered more than 116 projects and initiatives in the region, and enabled 26 countries, with more than 8,000 professionals, to benefit from the center. Projects include cyber security assessments, child online protection strategies, regional and national cyber drills, computer incident response team (CIRT) readiness, CIRT establishment assessments, specialized training, regional summits and conferences, and development of cyber security tools.

UNIPATH: Discuss some of the successful cyber drills the center has hosted or taken part in.

DR. AL RUZAIQI: The center plays a major role in organizing many cyber drills (national, regional and international) in collaboration with international cyber security firms. Since the establishment of the center, it has hosted and organized more than 10 cyber security drills targeting more than 22 countries of the ITU member states with technical and management type scenarios developed to address emerging threats and attacks.

UNIPATH: How has the center helped Oman develop national cyber security strategies or policies?

DR. AL RUZAIQI: The Regional Cybersecurity Centre engagements and collaboration with international cyber security firms and organizations in addressing the emerging threats and needs of the region have significantly contributed to sharpening the skills of the Omanis experts managing the regional center. It has exposed them to a wider range of cyber security threats, risks and mitigations strategies and policies. Such engagements have contributed positively to more effective national strategies and policies.

UNIPATH: How important are international partnerships for cyber security?

DR. AL RUZAIQI: Being in a digitally dependent world, cyber security has become a cross border and global issue. International cooperation and timely information sharing is essential in addressing the growing issues of cyber threats and cyber crime. Public-private partnerships are also considered a key success factor and strengthen efforts to mitigate cyber risks and threats and minimize their impacts.

UNIPATH: Is there anything else you would like to add?

DR. AL RUZAIQI: Oman has realized the importance of supporting regional and international efforts and initiatives to address the issues of cyber security. We have been significantly contributing to such efforts and initiatives — positioning Oman as a leading cyber security hub in the region and globally. This has resulted in

“Being in a digitally dependent world, cyber security has become a cross border and global issue. International cooperation and timely information sharing is essential in addressing the growing issues of cyber threats and cyber crime.”

– Dr. Salim Sultan Al Ruzaiqi, chief executive officer of the Sultanate of Oman’s ITA

obtaining a number of recognitions and achievements including:

- Selected to host the first regional cyber security center of the United Nations’ specialized agency for information and communications technology — the ITU — with a vision of creating a safer and cooperative cyber security environment in the Arab region and strengthening the role of ITU in building confidence and security in the use of information and communication technologies in the region.
- Ranked first in the Arab world and fourth globally in the Global Cyber Security Index.
- Elected to chair the board of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Computer Emergency Response Team, known as OIC-CERT. The OIC is considered the second largest organization after the United Nations with 57 member states and an observation status at the U.N.
- Obtained World Information Society Summit prizes in the field of building security and confidence in the use of ICT.
- Achieved multiple regional and international memberships, including with the global leading Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams, OIC-CERT, the Gulf Cooperation Council CERT, the Anti-Phishing Working Group, the Malware Alliance Organization, the Honey Net Project, the global CyberGreen initiative, the Safer Internet Day organization and the Global Cyberlympics.
- Established cyber security cooperation and initiatives with international organizations, including the ITU, the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the U.N. Institute for Disarmament Research and Chatham House.
- Signed cyber security cooperation memorandums of understanding with a number of countries, including South Korea, Malaysia, Estonia and Singapore. ♦



UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION

CENTRAL ASIA — VERSUS — ONLINE EXTREMISM

Combating terrorists online requires a focus on technology, education and economic development

— SALTANAT BERDIKEEVA —

T

housands of foreign fighters from around the globe were drawn to conflict zones in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Stories from places like France, Great Britain and

Germany describe men and women flocking to support Daesh and other terrorist groups and posing a security threat to Europe once they returned home.

The nations of Central Asia — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — are not immune to the problem.

Involvement in extremist and terrorist activity is a crime in Central Asian countries and punishable with imprisonment. To prevent terrorist recruitment, regional governments have focused on the cyber world, insisting that the internet — and social media in particular — is a key medium behind radicalization and recruitment of terrorists from the region.

Although recruitment has taken place in local mosques and through family, friends, neighbors, relatives, imams, and Central Asian labor migrants in Russia, a portion were recruited through social media and online messenger sites. Some observers are skeptical about the extent to which the internet aids in recruitment, but few deny that the web plays at least a partial role in nurturing violent extremism.

COMMON CHALLENGES

All Central Asian countries have been grappling with the ease of access to extremist material on the internet, particularly material on websites registered in domains abroad.

Twitter, Facebook, Telegram, Instagram, Odnoklassniki and V Kontakte (the latter two are Russian social media sites) have been used as recruitment tools in Central Asia. Social media made it easier for terrorists to recruit — they can capture the personal information of many users and contact people who leave comments on their posts. Recruitment efforts in Central Asia are not confined to social media. Telephone and computer applications, such as Skype, WhatsApp, Zello, Viber and Palringo, have also served as tools for terrorists to communicate, coordinate actions and recruit followers.

Given that terrorist messaging and recruitment through the internet have succeeded in Central Asia and elsewhere, why were extremist views able to win followers in the region known for nonviolent and tolerant practice of Islam? Several factors have contributed to the phenomenon.

One of the underlying themes of terrorist recruitment in Central Asia is the promise of material

well-being and a sense of purpose and belonging. This is a problem among Central Asian migrant laborers in Russia, whose experience with hostility and discrimination and lack of a family and social safety net have made them targets of terrorist recruiters.

Another contributing factor to recruitment in Central Asia is a lack of knowledge about Islam, a truth revealed in recent surveys. While the government suppressed religion under the Soviet Union, many people across Central Asia have rediscovered their Muslim faith after the Soviet Union's collapse.

Hundreds of Islam-related groups operate on social media sites, many preaching violent extremist distortions of Islam but without clear ties to terrorist organizations. These groups evade blocking by social media administrators. Deficient in religious knowledge, many young people become susceptible to propaganda and extremist interpretations of the religion.

However, poverty, social problems and lack of education are not the only causes. Terrorist recruiters have also successfully brought educated and relatively wealthy people into their ranks.



KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan has been struggling with radicalization and terrorist recruitment in cyberspace. Daesh recruited most of its Kyrgyz members through the internet. According to recent research by the organization Search for Common Ground in Kyrgyzstan, banned extremist and terrorist groups in the country heavily rely on social media to disseminate propaganda to youths. Primary online channels of recruitment in Kyrgyzstan have been YouTube, Facebook, Odnoklassniki and V Kontakte.

Kyrgyz analysts argue that blocking websites of terrorist organizations, the main method of countering online extremism, provides only temporary relief since terrorist messaging resurfaces elsewhere on the web. Blocking online information can also drive terrorist propaganda into the so-called darknet — secret websites that run on an encrypted system — making them nearly impossible to track down. It is even harder to block propaganda on social media housed on foreign servers. Participants at a 2017 symposium in Bishkek dedicated to countering online extremism stressed that one way to stem radicalization and recruitment is outreach programs that teach

critical thinking and understanding how online information can manipulate emotions.

Official responses to extremist messaging and recruitment include conducting counterpropaganda and cooperation between state authorities with religious leaders to prevent violent extremism in Kyrgyzstan. To fill the outreach and educational gap,

Realizing the magnitude of threats posed by online propaganda and recruitment, Kyrgyzstan created an Analytical Center of Security in 2017.

the country's Spiritual Board of Muslims has stepped up its role to instruct Muslims about Islam. According to Supreme Mufti of Kyrgyzstan Maksatbek kajy Toktomushev, the spiritual board held more than 800 educational events across the country in 2015 dedicated to tackling extremism and terrorism, and about 6,000 events in 2017.

Realizing the magnitude of threats posed by online propaganda and recruitment, Kyrgyzstan created an Analytical Center of Security in 2017. It researches existing cyber security threats, including online extremist propaganda. The center will assist the Kyrgyz State Committee for Information Technology in developing the country's first ever Strategy of Cyber Security, still in the works. The crafting of Kyrgyzstan's cyber strategy has exposed the country's shortage of technical and theological expertise to deal with both the religious content and how to conduct counter-propaganda on the internet.



TAJIKISTAN

An estimated 80 percent of the Tajiks who joined Daesh were migrants working in Russia. Low paying jobs, daily stress, and the unfamiliar cultural and linguistic environment made some Tajiks vulnerable to recruiters. Internet, mobile phones, and walkie-talkie apps, such as Zello, also help terrorist recruiters within Tajikistan.

With a high birth rate and about 200,000 young

Central Asia



people entering the workforce every year, Tajikistan has relied on remittance money from migrant workers. Propaganda videos that portrayed a happy and secure life in the “Islamic State” — compared with the reality of migrant life in Russia — swayed some Tajiks and their families to go to Syria.

Tajik authorities are concerned about the rise of terrorism within the country, given the killing of two American and two European bicyclists near the capital of Dushanbe in July 2018, an attack for which Daesh took credit.

Tajikistan is educating imams about technology and the internet as well as creating pages on Facebook and Odnoklassniki to encourage them to conduct counterpropaganda to challenge religious extremism.

The Tajik government has intensified its counter-terrorism and messaging since 2015. It formed a Headquarters for Combating Terrorism and Extremism under the General Prosecutor’s Office. All law enforcement agencies dealing with terrorism are now part of that headquarters. In 2016, Tajikistan adopted a

National Strategy to Counter Extremism and Terrorism for the period of 2016-2020 with the assistance of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The strategy outlined the country’s objective to understand and tackle the factors contributing to radicalization.

Tajikistan is educating imams about technology and the internet as well as creating pages on Facebook and Odnoklassniki to encourage them to conduct counterpropaganda to challenge religious extremism. Such training sessions in collaboration with the Institute for War and Peace Reporting have taken place in five provinces of Tajikistan. The government also announced amnesty to those who expressed remorse for joining Daesh and wished to return to Tajikistan. To date, more than 100 Tajik citizens have done so.



UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan shares many of the same challenges as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan — young people, including labor migrants, are the most vulnerable segments of the population because of social and economic pressures, poor knowledge of Islam, and technological

expertise among terrorists. Reportedly, the Russian social media site Odnoklassniki has been one of Daesh's main tools to recruit Uzbeks. Sharing a 137-kilometer border with Afghanistan, Uzbekistan is concerned that citizens returning from Iraq and Syria will seek safe havens in Afghanistan and attempt to destabilize Uzbekistan and Central Asia from afar. Such a concern is shared across the entire region.

To counter radicalization, especially from overseas, the [Uzbek] government has heavily promoted an enlightened version of tolerant Islam that seeks to highlight the religion's Central Asian roots.

Like others in Central Asia, the Uzbek government is increasingly emphasizing educating the public about threats posed by online propaganda through media, books and TV programs. In 2016, the Uzbek Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education made protection from online extremism part of a curriculum in universities, which includes a training manual that analyzes threats emanating from the internet. It also provides concrete cases of online terrorist recruitment and real stories of victims of recruitment and misinterpretation of the Quran.

As part of the state's counterterrorism and information campaign to discredit terrorists, the Uzbek Ministry of Culture, Uzbek cinema, and the National Television and Radio Company developed a program to highlight stories of Uzbek citizens who joined Daesh. In June 2018, Uzbekistan rolled out a new religious internet channel called Muslim TV aimed at combating extremism. To counter radicalization, especially from overseas, the government has heavily promoted an enlightened version of tolerant Islam that seeks to highlight the religion's Central Asian roots.

Uzbekistan is at the early stages of developing laws that address cyber security threats. A strategy to improve information security with an emphasis on countering threats and lowering the risk of hostile cyber actions against the country is in progress. Along with domestic efforts to find ways to counter online extremist propaganda, the Uzbek authorities are also prioritizing cooperation with neighboring countries to combat terrorist propaganda on the internet.



TURKMENISTAN

According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), Turkmen represented a relatively small number of Daesh recruits. ICG attributes that smaller number to the relatively low penetration of the internet in Turkmenistan. One of the main recruitment channels has been luring Turkmen migrant workers living in Turkey. Recruiters have used money to entice Turkmen, in some cases blackmailing illegal workers with threats of deportation.

The Turkmen authorities have held workshops and meetings with regional governments and international organizations to discover best practices in cyber security and how to stop terrorist recruitment on the internet.

The Turkmen authorities have held workshops and meetings with regional governments and international organizations to discover best practices in cyber security and how to stop terrorist recruitment on the internet. However, Turkmenistan has not yet developed a cyber security or information operations policy to address the problem.



KAZAKHSTAN

According to Kazakhstan's media, Daesh recruited Kazakhs mostly from poor areas of the country, such as Aktyubinsk, Vostochno-Kazakhstanskiy and Karaganda provinces.

Kazakh religious specialist Gulzat Bilyalova noted that much of the recruitment took place on networks outside Astana's control. "As media monitoring and victim testimonies published in the press demonstrate,

most of the extremist propaganda and recruitment take place through foreign social networks, such as Facebook, V Kontakte, Twitter and YouTube,” he said.

The Kazakh government has removed thousands of pages of material containing online promotion of terrorism, extremism and suicide. The Kazakh authorities expressed concern about radicalization among youths who search online for religious education courses, but instead are misdirected to propaganda and recruitment sites. They continue to reach out to young people and their parents to guide them toward a sensible view of religion.

Kazakhstan bolstered cyber defenses to address a new generation of threats, including terrorist recruitment. Under the instruction of Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Kazakh government and the National Security Committee, a main state intelligence agency, is developing the so-called cyber shield, which will be part of the government’s program to combat terrorism for the period of 2017-2020.

According to Minister of Defense and Aerospace Industry Beibit Atamkulov, cyber shield is a set of organizational, legal, and technical measures that will help protect government infrastructure, promote education in information security, and investigate computer incidents. Because of the cross-sectoral impact of cyber threats, cooperation between various government bodies in Kazakhstan is expected to be strengthened to ensure cyber security.

The Kazakh government has removed thousands of pages of material containing online promotion of terrorism, extremism and suicide.

The Kazakh authorities plan to use the cyber shield to prevent more terrorist recruitment and crack down on extremist ideas. Daulet Yergozhin, deputy chairman of the National Security Committee, stressed that in the event of a massive terrorist information campaign, the committee can limit access to the web in certain parts of the country. However, such measures will be used only in extreme cases, Yergozhin said.

The Kazakh government recognizes that the problems of radicalization and recruitment cannot be solved by censorship. Stressing the importance of knowledge about religion and secularism, Kazakhstan introduced a course for teens in 2009 called The Basics of Religious Studies. The course promotes no

All Central Asian countries have been grappling with the ease of access to extremist material on the internet, particularly material on websites registered in domains abroad.



single religion and “provides students with systematic knowledge about the meaning of religion, history, and formation of spiritual and moral values.” Meantime, Kazakhstan’s Committee on Religious Affairs and the Congress of Religious Scholars are involved in improving qualifications for teachers of religion.

THE PATH FORWARD

Of all the counterpropaganda efforts, educating people about Islam and its extremist misinterpretation appears to be emerging as a common theme across Central Asia. In addition, the establishment of cyber security laws in some Central Asian countries, which include reducing the risks of recruitment by terrorist organizations and cracking down on extremist ideology, is a relatively recent development.

Countries in the region are only beginning to catch up to addressing threats in cyberspace. It could take time for these programs to mature and stop the spread of extremist ideas, messaging and recruitment.

The internet has served as a means for radicalization and terrorist recruitment, but it is not the underlying reason why hundreds of ordinary people from Central Asia decided to become terrorists. Many observers in the region stress that improved economic prospects typically undercut terrorist recruitment.

While poverty in and of itself is not sufficient to radicalize a person, sometimes it has played an indirect role among many Central Asians who went to fight in Syria, Iraq and even Afghanistan. Numerous reports and stories from the region attest to online radicalization of Central Asian laborers in Russia and elsewhere who left their home countries in search of a better life.

Online recruitment of foreign fighters by violent extremist organizations is a global problem. Solving the problem is a task best handled in partnership with a multinational coalition of the like-minded. ♦



COUNTERING

THE

INFORMATION

INVASION

THE JORDAN ARMED FORCES DIRECTORATE OF MORAL GUIDANCE COMBATS TERRORIST MESSAGING

UNIPATH STAFF

It was no secret that terrorist groups were active on certain isolated webpages, but Daesh's invasion of social media sites in 2014 and the emergence of terrorist media and an electronic army on Twitter surprised the world's security apparatuses. Daesh propagandists invaded social media sites in an unprecedented campaign, posting thousands of messages and images that were copied by other Daesh-affiliated accounts to ensure they would reach the largest possible number of followers. Daesh waged a media campaign and a vast psychological war on Facebook and Twitter, making it necessary to open an electronic front to defeat terrorism as battles raged in Syria and Iraq.

Unipath sat down with Brig. Gen. Ouda Shudeifat, director of media and moral guidance in the Jordan Armed Forces, who described Jordan's role in exposing Daesh lies, hindering Daesh's ability to ensnare young people on social media, and helping young people recover from terrorist brainwashing.

***Unipath:* What is Jordan's role in exposing terrorist ideology in social media?**


Brig. Gen. Ouda: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was one of the first countries to raise the alarm about this radical ideology. His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein addressed the international community in more than one venue to warn it about the dangers of this ideology that began invading social media networks through Daesh promoters and sympathizers. Daesh targeted young people specifically and started

using nefarious enticements that deviated from divine law. It exploited the free time that a lot of young people have, it exploited material poverty in some places, it exploited marginalized youth in some countries — in that way it found a broad audience on the internet. It promoted sinister and exclusionary ideas that resonated with its target audience on social media networks to attract the largest possible number of supporters and sympathizers and recruit them to carry out terrorist acts that are incompatible with religious, humanitarian and societal norms and traditions.

From that starting point, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan acted to combat this ideology. It developed plans and studies within its programs in the security ministries. It also worked internationally, coordinating with sisterly and friendly nations both within and outside the region. There was a significant effort between the United States of America and Jordan to counter terrorist threats and prevent this scourge that Daesh represented to all countries.

***Unipath:* How does the Directorate of Media and Moral Guidance unmask Daesh rhetoric?**

Brig. Gen. Ouda: After these terrorist groups emerged on the ground and on social media networks alike, the Directorate of Moral Guidance got started. The directorate is the entity concerned with media, psychological warfare and strategic communication in the Jordan Armed Forces. We worked to monitor everything published by Daesh groups because they have used all available



THIS INTELLECTUAL INVASION IS NOT LIMITED TO A PARTICULAR REGION OR NATION. IT IS A DECLARATION OF HOSTILITY AGAINST ALL NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

media and even mass media like speeches, mosque sermons, poetry forums, and social activities. The Directorate of Moral Guidance began by tracking and analyzing all publications and messages, and in cooperation with all the relevant authorities in the kingdom of Jordan, we formulated counter-messages to illustrate the ugliness of those ideas and how remote they are from reality, humanity and Islam. The terrorist propagandists cherry-picked certain texts and fabricated interpretations of hadiths, then used them to lure young people and deceive the uninformed and the general public.

But there was a very significant effort through an integrated task force at the media center and the strategic communication unit. We began to track everything that Daesh published and sent counter-messages to educate the community locally and messages exposing the lies and crimes of these terrorist gangs. There was a great deal of cooperation with our American partners in the field of information operations to counter Daesh's lies with scientifically based messages. The exchange of information and ideas is essential, and producing effective content is very necessary because this intellectual invasion is not limited to a particular region or nation. It is a declaration of hostility against all nations of the world. And the evils of this deviant faction have arrived in various nations of the world. I'll point out that the remnants of Daesh are on the ground, and the generations raised in the shadow of Daesh and the so-called Cubs of the Caliphate need follow-up and rehabilitation and careful messaging so that we can work together

as allied, friendly forces and amicable, like-minded countries to pluck the seed of evil from the earth before it takes root.

Unipath: Daesh had a media machine that blanketed social media pages at that time. What steps have you taken to prevent it from coming back?

Brig. Gen. Ouda: Social media pages are a recently established form of media that has spread very quickly and is available to all age groups. This requires that we establish media within this media, both pages for the Armed Forces and pages for those who support the Jordan Armed Forces and other state institutions, speaking in a unified voice to encourage tolerance and peaceful coexistence and to reject violence and exclusion. We have fought them using the same means that they use to spread terrorist ideology and lure our youth. We have not been working alone but rather by cooperating and coordinating with other ministries, civil society, international organizations and friendly forces with whom we participate in joint exercises and exchange experiences. We established a specialized strategic communication unit that is monitoring and analyzing terrorist rhetoric and sending messages to the local community, countries in the region, and the international community to highlight the principles of Islam and to demonstrate the moderation and centrism of this religion, which arose for the sake of human dignity and humanity.

The khawarij have exploited and abused the religion through their inhumane practices. Here, on behalf of myself and the Directorate of Moral Guidance and all its leaders and staff, I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to our friends in the American forces who have never ceased providing ideas and assistance with all the techniques for delivering messages to the international community and messaging to expose the lies of the misguided faction targeting young people and getting them mixed up in terrorist operations.

Unipath: You mentioned the Cubs of the Caliphate. What in your view is the best solution to this problem?

Brig. Gen. Ouda: Based on my work and from following events, I think the issue is extremely worrying. Here in Jordan, we are monitoring it with the utmost concern and caution. The Cubs of the Caliphate are children who have been raised in the shadow of a depraved ideology. Most of them now are children without fathers or mothers. They have been raised on killing, torture and all manner of violations and crimes. It has been sown in their young minds that this Daesh ideology is what will save the world. They call others infidels and believe that they are right and that they will be the ones who lead the world to salvation.

From this standpoint, I think there must be a major focus on refined programs to rehabilitate these people, or some of them, and to cleanse their minds of these terrorist ideas that they received through brainwashing. I think that efforts must be aligned among all stakeholders in friendly nations concerned with this problem to find approaches, methods and ideas to care for these groups, and to activate media content within social media to serve the goals and objectives that the world seeks to achieve.

This is a dilemma, and the world must be attentive to it. These people, if they leave, could infiltrate all the nations of the world. Especially because some of them are illegitimate children, or they don't know who their fathers are, and they may be called by different names, which means they can disguise themselves and disappear. We need to be more careful in dealing with the risk of this generation, which could be worse than Daesh. It is an international problem and must be addressed internationally, because it is impossible to solve it at a local level because it is not uniquely a concern for Iraq, Jordan, Syria, or any other nation. It is a global concern.

The world must also turn to Africa. Terrorists are using African countries — where terrorist groups loyal to Daesh reside — as incubators and alternative locations. In these African children, they may find a terrorist element prepared to kill innocent people. Especially because some of these nations have a complex geographical, political, ethnic and religious environment. My hope is that all nations of the world and civil society organizations will turn to this problem and work toward groundbreaking, international solutions.

Unipath: What is the role of partnerships in developing the combat capabilities of friendly forces and enforcing security in the region?

Brig. Gen. Ouda: We have been working with our friends the Americans for a long time. We are linked to them by deeply rooted political and military relationships, and great support and cooperation exist between us. We also cooperate through exercises, exchange of experience and living together in the field. We have worked with American forces in more than one place in the world. We have provided

**WE CAN WORK TOGETHER AS
ALLIED, FRIENDLY FORCES
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them much of the expertise that they need in the region because we are the closest and most aware of customs and traditions — we know what messages are most effective with the public. In exchange, they also offer us military expertise through joint drills, armaments and training in nontraditional combat and guerrilla warfare. We cooperate effectively in all logistical, tactical and technical areas with the American military, for which we have total respect and appreciation. We work together to benefit our countries. ♦

A STRATEGY FOR **VICTORY** IN
AFGHANISTAN



Nonviolent measures to combat violent extremist ideology should supplement military efforts

AHMAD FARID FOROZI, THE ASIA FOUNDATION

Violence driven by extreme interpretation of religious texts and unjustified aggressive ideologies has taken the lives of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children in Afghanistan since the beginning of conflict in the country in 1978. Millions more have been forced to leave their homes and migrate to other countries. This human catastrophe represents a lost opportunity for development and economic growth, leaving Afghanistan one of the poorest countries of the world.

Today the armed opposition groups (AOGs) — most prominently the Taliban and Daesh — are using a distorted interpretation of religion to legitimize societal destruction and the ongoing brutal attacks on Afghanistan's government and population. Illustrating this were the terrorist attacks in 2018 on the city of Ghazni that caused death and destruction.

Historically, different regimes in power in the capital Kabul have resorted to force to curb insurgencies and terrorism driven by violent religious ideologues. The current conflict in Afghanistan is no exception. But military force is not sufficient to uproot and repudiate extremist movements eager to take action against the political and social order.

In Afghanistan, we currently have behavioral top-down radicalization wherein radical groups recruit vulnerable young men from impoverished families and prepare them to engage in violence to challenge the political order, social

norms and the presence of NATO troops.

The ongoing conflict has both its internal as well as cross border and international dynamics.

Afghan children walk to school near Herat. The government needs to register schools to ensure they don't teach violent extremism. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

If the policies of the Afghan government and

its foreign allies are effectively focused on addressing internal underlying causes of terrorist recruitment, the external factors shall fail to pose a significant challenge to stability of the country.

The question is what are those internal underlying factors that terrorists exploit to attract and indoctrinate so many young people and wage such a prolonged and exhausting war against coalition forces in Afghanistan? And what nonviolent measures can the Afghan government and its multinational allies undertake to contain the crimes of violent extremists?



WEAK PUBLIC SERVICES

In the first place, archaic governance, poor or nonexistent public services, poverty and unemployment have damaged popular confidence in Afghanistan's central government. In some cases, this lack of confidence helped AOGs stir up opposition to the government and assume control in remote parts of the country.

An in-depth analysis of the current state of public services important to ordinary citizens would provide an overall picture of where gaps exist and what could be done to win people's confidence. The government and its international partners may need to prioritize investing more in efficient delivery of basic public services to remote rural areas targeted by extremists.

Equally important is the need for extensive reform to improve the country's business environment. Simplification of business registration processes, streamlining and relaxing the tax system and adopting business protection strategies are fundamental to improving the country's economic competitiveness.

On the whole, an environment conducive to running private businesses could attract domestic and foreign investment necessary for economic growth and job creation — particularly for youths vulnerable to recruitment by AOGs.

ALIENATION AND DISCONNECTEDNESS

In addition, disconnect between the government and the people left many parents and households in remote rural areas unaware of the vulnerability of their children to insurgents' propaganda and recruitment campaigns. Government officials typically lacked a systemic mechanism to reach communities and households to make them aware of their responsibilities for protecting their children from exposure to radical indoctrination.

Communities and parents can play an important role in preventing younger children from joining radical groups and AOGs. For parents to play this very much needed role, the government needs to launch awareness campaigns, suitable to the contexts of mostly illiterate and marginalized communities.

The campaigns may involve approaches such as radio announcements, leaflets with infographics, community mobilization events, family counseling, text messaging, religious sermons during Friday prayers and interventions by community elders.

ABUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The AOGs and the foreign groups and institutions behind them invested significant resources in the use of social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogging websites) to promote their ideologies and recruit individuals for violence. The internet has been particularly effective in attracting the kind of socially ostracized individuals vulnerable to recruitment.

Low cost, wide ranging and available 24/7, social media and the internet are effective tools for radical groups to propagate ideas, mobilize public opinion, and attract new recruits for their twisted and destructive causes.

Registration and systemic monitoring of all religious madrasas should be considered the core of the government's counterradicalization and counterinsurgency strategy. Information gathering on the numbers, locations and activities of unregistered madrasas is vital for proper registration and control of madrasa activities.

Technical difficulties and implied free speech limitations make it difficult for the government to trace and disrupt AOGs' social media campaigns and propaganda. AOGs' propaganda tools also include night letters (*shabnama*) and small memory cards holding extremist sermons or videos of training camps.

Systemic and rigorous monitoring of AOGs' propaganda web and Facebook, YouTube and Twitter pages could inform development of counternarratives to turn people away from radicalization and violence.

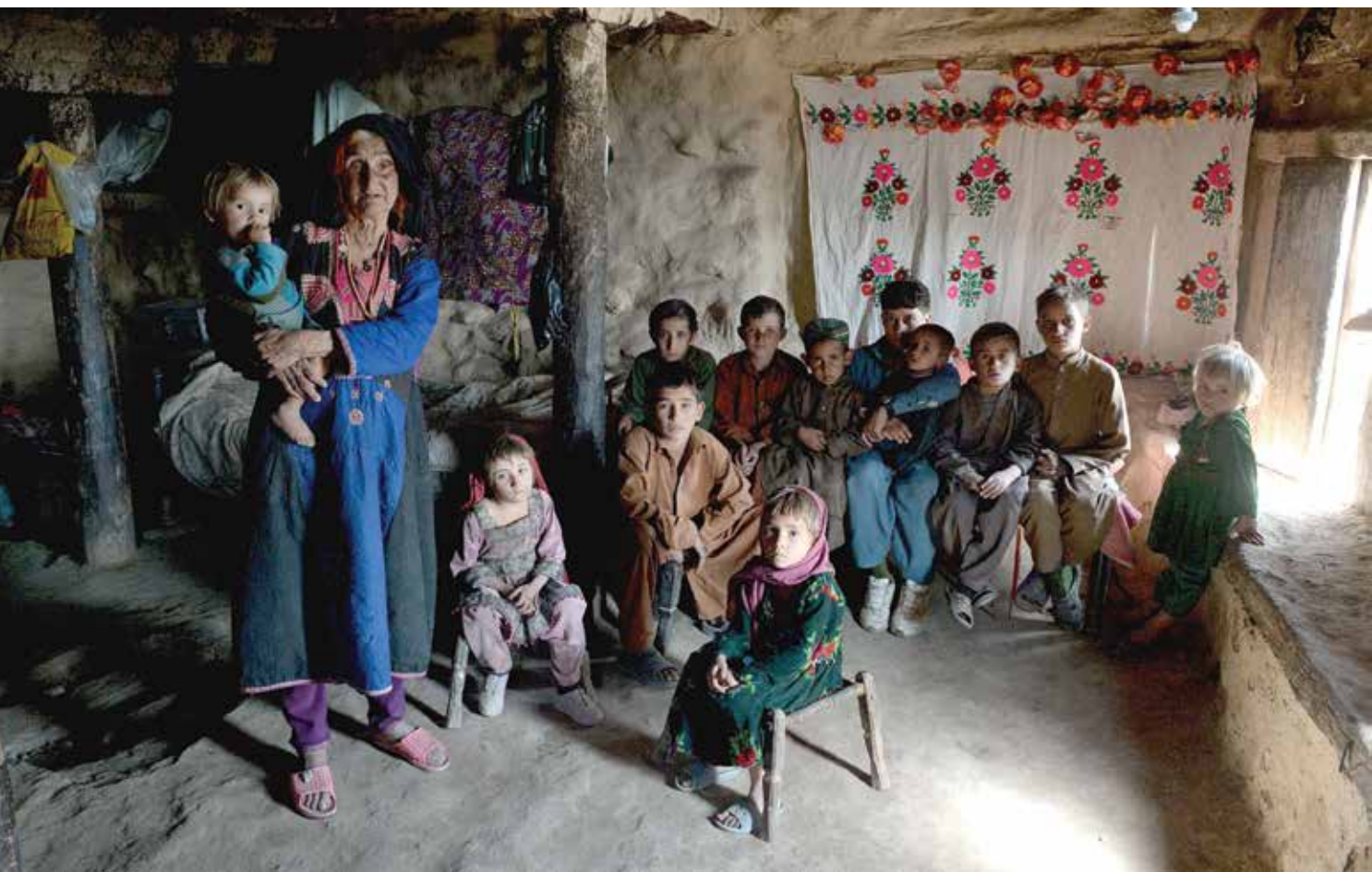
Specialized units may be required to perform both monitoring of social media pages belonging to radical groups and timely development and dissemination of counternarratives to diffuse AOG propaganda and prevent youths and children from joining the terrorists.

At the community level, the launch of awareness campaigns could expose the potential risks of specific social media pages exploited by AOGs and their external enablers.

UNREGISTERED MADRASAS

Equally important is the threat posed by unregistered madrasas which act as incubators for violent extremism and provide a venue for training and recruitment of youths by radical insurgent groups.

With little or no oversight from the government, these religious schools determine their own curriculum, adhere to a severe interpretation of religious texts and promote a



narrative of violence. Unregistered madrasas attract impoverished families in rural areas who can ensure their children get free schooling, food and accommodations. What happens next in these madrasas is tragic and dangerous.

Young children are locked in these schools for months and even years without guidance from parents or guardians. They are sometimes sexually abused, and most of these madrasas are controlled by extremists linked to dangerous terrorist groups and intelligence agencies of foreign countries.

Children and youngsters studying in many of these madrasas are systematically brainwashed into becoming suicide bombers or soldiers who follow only two goals — kill or be killed.

Registration and systemic monitoring of all religious madrasas should be considered the core of the government's counterradicalization and counterinsurgency strategy. Information gathering on the numbers, locations and activities of unregistered madrasas is vital for proper registration and control of madrasa activities.

The government must be prepared to shut down schools unready to register under applicable laws. All registered madrasas data shall be maintained in a dynamic database to assist in systemic monitoring of activities, curriculum and backgrounds and motivations of their instructors.

Moreover, the training and orientation of faculty and staff of registered madrasas should be an integral part of the

Afghan widow Janat Bibi poses with her grandchildren in Nangarhar province. After the Taliban killed the adult males in her family, she was left to raise the children without support. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

government strategy to insure that instructors and managers of religious schools are not terrorist sympathizers and teach a tolerant and moderate interpretation of religious texts.

CONCLUSION

During the past 18 years, the Afghan government and its allies have relied mostly on the use of force as the main pillar of their strategy to contain the ongoing insurgency waged by violent extremist groups. But such a strategy is not enough.

There is still time for a thoughtful shift by the Afghan government and its international friends to realign counterinsurgency strategies to address domestic drivers of extremism.

Improving governance, delivering customer-centric public services, fighting corruption, identifying and supporting war-affected families, launching counterradicalization awareness campaigns, strengthening links with communities, rigorously monitoring social media and dissemination of counternarratives, and registering and controlling unregistered madrasas could be part of an overall nonviolent strategy for preventing youths from joining violent groups and containing terrorism. ♦

COASTAL DEFENSE

***Jordan assembles a Marine battalion
to protect the vital port of Aqaba and
conduct overseas missions***



Jordanian Marines train in the Gulf of Aqaba with U.S. Marines in July 2018 to build the capabilities of the kingdom's Marine battalion.

CPL. JON SOSNER/U.S. MARINE CORPS

At the Regional Marine Symposium in Abu Dhabi in August 2018, Unipath spoke with Staff Lt. Col. Mutasim Al-Rabie, commanding officer of the 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion:

UNIPATH: What are the duties of the 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: The battalion will protect military bases in Aqaba and provide protection for Jordanian naval headquarters, the Marine Training Center in Titin and other government and economic facilities within the Aqaba region. We are ready to fulfil any duty required by the leadership. The battalion sent three companies to participate in the special operations force in Afghanistan. Each unit was involved for six months. I currently have highly skilled and experienced noncommissioned officers who participated in Afghanistan and worked in a multinational environment. In addition, two teams specializing in ship landing operations were sent to work with coalition countries to fight piracy and smuggling within the Middle East, Gulf of Aqaba and Gulf of Aden.

UNIPATH: What kind of experience did you gain in Afghanistan working with coalition forces?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: First, as a Marine infantryman operating within a real area of operations, it was very useful to gain experience from friendly forces by participating in the process, becoming familiar with weapons used by other forces and grappling with the enemy in a joint operating environment. We also learned to exchange intelligence among allied countries.

UNIPATH: What is the battalion's involvement in humanitarian relief missions?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: The 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion participated in several humanitarian relief missions within the Afghanistan region. Our experience was good in dealing with our brothers

in Afghanistan in the field of humanitarian relief. In addition, His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein urges peace and stability within the region. We in Jordan are surrounded by conflict zones, and the Arab Army has great experience in dealing with Syrian refugees. They were treated with humanitarian aims in mind and were provided with care and material and emotional support in refugee camps. In addition, our Syrian brothers have shared everything with the Jordanian people. There are now almost 1.5 million of them, or maybe more, which is a huge number for a country with limited resources like Jordan. We support Syrian refugees, trying to provide them with security and reassurance since they have become our guests after they left their own country as a result of the conflict and fighting there.

UNIPATH: You frequently train with friendly forces in place such as Camp Titin. What is the benefit?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: The U.S. Marines have distinguished themselves as a military force with great capabilities and long experience fighting wars in vastly different circumstances. Working with them provides us with training and tactical know-how. We are extremely happy to work with them in terms of training, as we are hosting a training team from a friendly force that will provide the battalion with all tactics and training needed for marine infantry. At the same time, the Marines benefit from day-to-day interaction and getting to know more about the prevailing cultures, traditions, and customs, as well as the language of Jordan and the whole region in general. In addition, we try to connect with them in our daily lives because their mission is a long one and should include both military and cultural exchanges.



Soldiers from the 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion train with U.S. Marines. DIRECTORATE OF MORALE GUIDANCE , JORDAN ARMED FORCES

UNIPATH: Despite the military nature of the marine battalion, you mentioned missions in Aqaba. What is the nature of this task?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: The battalion is ready to deal with any incident within the Aqaba Special Economic Zone. It is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's only port and contains numerous significant economic and tourist sites. There are also several economically significant ports like the oil and gas port, the phosphate port, and the main port. These ports are vital for the kingdom's economy. So there must be a force in Aqaba to protect and maintain them, in addition to protecting investments and tourist sites in the region.

UNIPATH: What are the challenges facing the battalion?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: The challenges are not specific in Jordan but are the same throughout the region, namely extremist and terrorist groups that preoccupy the security services of the region and work to destabilize countries. Fighting these groups and protecting countries from them has become the world's overriding concern. Neighboring countries have suffered greatly from these terrorist groups that have brought misery and

destruction to previously safe cities. These *kharajis* have distorted the image of Islam with ideas that have no place in the religion. Moreover, they murdered and took the lives of innocent people, causing material and moral damage to many of these countries.

UNIPATH: What are your plans to develop and maintain the battalion's performance?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: The battalion was formed in 2006 as a marine infantry company. In 2009, a decision was made to expand it to a battalion. The first and second companies were established, in addition to a leadership company responsible for the battalion's administrative affairs and for providing the battalion with services and transportation. We have passed through several developmental stages between 2009 and 2018. At the same time, and in parallel, the battalion has been training with forces from friendly and brotherly countries. This simultaneous development and training is being carried out in parallel. The third company was formed in 2011, but there was a shortage in manpower and equipment. Thanks to a royal order, with collaboration of the General Command of the Jordanian Armed Forces and the Navy, we managed to provide the battalion with the equipment it needed to

carry out its tasks and assigned operations in full without the support of any other party.

Regarding the battalion's development in the near future, I received command of the battalion five months ago. I am focusing on developing and preparing noncommissioned officers because they are the battalion's backbone. Moreover, I am working on educating and increasing the awareness of battalion members and training them about the region and its geopolitical circumstances. Moreover, at the beginning of the coming year,

region. In addition, we learned that some countries have their own methodology in dealing with regional challenges. We listened to the ideas of certain countries for facing challenges and threats. Moreover, we benefited from the successful techniques used by fellow forces to fight smuggling and piracy within their regional waters. And participants exchanged experiences. I would like to thank the sponsors and supporters of this successful seminar, especially the host country, the United Arab Emirates, and the U.S. Marines for sponsoring this seminar. We look

“We listened to the ideas of certain countries for facing challenges and threats. Moreover, we benefited from the successful techniques used by fellow forces to fight smuggling and piracy within their regional waters.”

we will start forming a quick response company, by which point we will have filled 95 percent of the ranks of the battalion. The remaining component is the reconnaissance platoon, which is a central and effective part of the battalion because it requires specific development, qualifications, and updated equipment and technology.

UNIPATH: Tell us about the speedboats the 77th Battalion will receive?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: As I mentioned, we will form a reconnaissance platoon as a part of the battalion's development plan. These speedboats are a part of the platoon's equipment, which are assault boats. We are working hard to provide these boats to the Marines as soon as possible to help us use our trained forces to combat piracy and terrorism and to face any threat approaching from the sea.

UNIPATH: What is your impression of the Regional Marine Seminar?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: Through our participation in the 2018 Regional Marine Seminar, we have had many successful experiences with Marines present in the region. The participating countries were the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Lebanon and the United States. It was a constructive event that allowed all attendees, including commissioned and noncommissioned officers, to learn more and exchange experiences with participants from other countries in the

forward to continuing this conference, which has enriched the participants so that we stand together as a joint force to maintain the security and stability of our coasts and territorial waters.

UNIPATH: What experiences shared at the symposium can help Jordan?

Lt. Col. Mutasim: There are many things that have impressed us, such as the experience of our brothers in the Emirates who formed a special strategic force called Al Fursan with distinctive capabilities and technologies that will play a major role in maintaining the security and stability of the UAE coast. In addition, we benefited from the experience of the Lebanese Marine Commandos, who have broad capabilities and numerous specialties. They include Marine infantry, frogmen and bomb disposal experts. This diversity of specialties provides the team with a unique character. Moreover, we learned from Omanis how they merge the duties of Marine infantry with those of the Navy to work as one, since Navy officers receive both naval and Marine infantry training. As for Bahrain, we learned about their first steps toward forming a Marine infantry unit. We have also benefited from the experiences of Saudi Arabia and the increased capabilities of its Marines through focusing on special training provided to the battalion aimed at blocking the enemy's military operations. This is because the kingdom has extensive maritime boundaries. Each region has its own challenges. The Saudis also have an extensive experience on Yemeni coasts. ♦

THE TRIBAL CONTRIBUTION



HEROIC TRIBAL FIGHTERS PLAYED A LARGE ROLE IN HELPING LIBERATE TOWNS AND CITIES IN NORTHERN IRAQ

UNIPATH STAFF

When Daesh swept into Mosul in 2014, it targeted the city's leaders who had rejected extremist ideology since the emergence of terrorism in Iraq. The terrorists came with a list containing the names of elders, dignitaries and clerics. Daesh leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi commanded that "these apostates be cut off even if they seek haven in the curtain of the Kaaba." Topping the list of names was Sheikh Khalid al-Sabah al-Jubouri, head of the al-Jabour clan in the Nimrud and Hamdania areas south of Mosul. The terrorists burned his home and his guest house, but this cowardly act did not discredit the honor of a sheikh who was dedicated to defending the dignity and honor of his city. *Unipath* met with Sheikh Khalid:



Sheikh Khalid
al-Sabah al-Jubouri

***Unipath:* Where were you during the fall of Mosul?**

Sheikh Khalid: I was in the Salamiyah district of Mosul until the last moments on the night of October 6, 2014. I took my family and left Mosul at 3:30 a.m. from the Nimrud area to the district of Hamdania, which had not yet fallen into the hands of Daesh. I did so because I was wanted by terrorist organizations.

***Unipath:* Why was Daesh looking for you?**

Sheikh Khalid: Since the emergence of terrorist organizations in Iraq in 2004, we knew their sick agenda and knew that they were murderers and criminals who came to Iraq under the pretext of "fighting the occupation" and "jihad" and "relieving Sunnis of injustice" — empty pretexts and slogans to achieve their agendas. The Nimrud region was a source of terrorist groups where their leaders were well-known, and strangely

enough, they were not known for being pious. They were a mixture of officials of the former regime and an opportunistic group that was motivated by money or were outcasts in society. They allied themselves with a person named Mullah Mahdi known for his takfiri ideas and allegiance to Zarqawi. In a matter of weeks, Mahdi was transformed from an isolated takfiri into the branch leader of the terrorist organization Tawhid and Jihad with 150 Iraqi and Arab followers.

***Unipath:* You implied that Mahdi received outside money. Who was his financier?**

Sheikh Khalid: As you know, there are regional countries that got involved, and Mahdi went to Syria for a time and returned loaded with money. We have confirmed this information.

***Unipath:* When did the tribes in Mosul begin armed confrontation against terrorism?**

Sheikh Khalid: Our resistance to terrorism began in 2004, and I am proud of what I have done to save my city and my family from its dangers. We worked with the U.S. forces that were responsible for security at the time and the local police and Army in the city. We have done a great job of expelling the terrorist gangs. I have been subjected to dozens of assassination attempts, and more than 50 of my brothers and men have become martyrs from 2004 to 2014. Despite the pressure exerted by some politicians against the Awakening and the cessation of material support for us after the withdrawal of U.S. forces, we continued our work and didn't allow the terrorist gangs to return, because we defend our dignity and the future of our children. There are many who decided to help terrorism at the cost of innocent blood, and in return the terrorists facilitated for them to leave Iraq and live in neighboring countries like princes. But we refused to aid those who killed our people, and we made sacrifices and

achieved economic prosperity in our villages. Had we continued to hold the land in our villages after 2010, Daesh wouldn't have occupied Mosul. But unfortunately we were let down by the unfair political deals of the previous government, especially those who benefited from sectarian discourse, which dragged the country into darkness.

Unipath: When did you take pre-emptive military action after the fall of Mosul?

Sheikh Khalid: After I left Mosul that night, I came to Baghdad with my family to secure their safety and be close to the decision-making centers in the capital. When the international coalition formed, I met U.S. Gen. John Allen in Baghdad. I was the only sheikh from Nineveh province in that meeting. The meeting was attended by Sheikh Wasfi al-Asi, Sheikh al-Obeid from Kirkuk, Sheikh Ali al-Burhan al-Azzawi from Diyala and Sheikh Rafie Abdul Karim al-Fahdawi from Ramadi and Sheikh Marwan al-Jabara from Salah al-Din. We started building an intelligence network of people who refused to submit to Daesh and could get accurate information about its movements and weapons sites inside the city. And I was in contact with our brothers in the Iraqi intelligence service, who in turn provided the Iraqi Air Force and coalition forces with information. This was the beginning of the long march to cleanse our cities from the filth of terrorism. Dozens of targets have been bombed based on the information we have provided. I am proud to say that

we foiled more than one operation to break through to the besieged Bayji refinery at the time. We gave specific information about the movement of a Daesh column from Mosul en route to Bayji, which was destroyed by an airstrike before Daesh arrived. And we helped destroy many targets inside Mosul — the compounds, headquarters and weapons caches belonging to Daesh. I attended regular meetings with our friends in the international coalition in the Combined Joint Operations Command (CJOC).

Unipath: Did you participate as tribal forces in the battle to liberate Mosul?

Sheikh Khalid: We are honored to have actually participated with the 43rd Tribal Battalion, entering with the 9th Armored Division at the Kuwair crossing toward the Nimrud area southeast of Nineveh. There we merged with the Commando Regiment of the 15th Division and worked with Lt. Gen. Abdul Amir Yarallah; Lt. Gen. Reyadh Jalal, commander of Iraqi Ground Forces, and his deputy, Maj. Gen. Dhyaa Al-Saidi; Lt. Gen. Qassem Nazzal, commander of the 9th Division; and Maj. Gen. Najem al-Jubouri, commander of Nineveh Operations. I am proud to have worked with professional and national leaders in the Iraqi Army.

Unipath: Was there a time when the presence of tribal men was decisive in determining the outcome of a battle?

Sheikh Khalid: In a village in the center of Nimrud city — an open area containing 800 houses — terrorists established a line of fire, dug tunnels, planted bombs, installed sniper nests and deployed suicide bombers to block the progress of troops. When the battle of liberation began in November, I was standing with Lt. Gen. Yarallah. We were about a kilometer and a half from the front lines. Because of the fierceness of the battle, the commandos suffered big losses and asked for reinforcements. But other units were already committed, and there was no force ready to respond. Lt. Gen. Yarallah asked me for help, and I was happy for this request. We entered the heart of the battle at 8 p.m. and dispersed among the military units there. Our presence boosted morale among the Soldiers when they noticed the Sons of Mosul supporting them to liberate the city. The battle was settled on the morning of the second day. Yarallah's team personally thanked us, and the prime minister praised our battlefield exploits during a weekly press conference. We continued to fight until we entered the southeastern neighborhoods of the province such as the Al-Salam neighborhood and Al-Ansar. There we stopped fighting and were tasked with holding the liberated areas.

Unipath: How did your presence boost morale?

Sheikh Khalid: Because we are the sons of the city and know its roads and hideouts, we participated in the liberation of about 37 villages. Our fighters used to climb up on the tanks with the Soldiers and guide units toward the villages, directing the Soldiers to avoid some of the populated alleys. Tribal people possess better knowledge of villages than maps. So we participated with the planning team in mapping and preparing for the liberation of our regions and determining the best ways to enter the city. We have information about every house; we know the houses where terrorists were entrenched and where the innocent reside.



Sheikh Khalid stands on the outskirts of Mosul with tribal fighters of the 43rd battalion.

43RD TRIBAL BATTALION



Sheikh Khalid inspects the defense perimeter of Alabas Rajab village in Nimrud. 43RD TRIBAL BATTALION

Unipath: At that time the situation was dangerous and it was difficult to know who your enemy was. How did you avoid recruiting a terrorist by mistake?

Sheikh Khalid: The first stage of recruitment was limited to displaced families, people who fled during Daesh's entry into the city and were subjected to security checks. In the second stage, which raised many fears, we were aided by the fact that Daesh's entry into villages unmasked its supporters and sympathizers. In our villages we know each other and know very well who joined Daesh and who was working as an informant. There were no secrets in this regard. On this basis, reliable people were chosen.

Unipath: Did security forces benefit from accurate information about the population during the security check in camps for internally displace people?

Sheikh Khalid: We have participated in the tracking and arrest of the remnants of the Daesh that hid among families. I worked directly with the leaders of the Ministry of the Interior when the security audit team arrived in the city of Alkayara with

computers and coordinated with us to provide protection and a special place for the team. We left some tribesmen with the team at the main checkpoints and crossings to help security forces identify terrorists who arrived with false cards or were not registered in computers. We played a major role in directly identifying terrorists. Especially since there is direct contact between me and the tribal sheikhs in the city, sometimes we contact a sheikh and by our personal relationships we get enough information about the person. After the liberation of the right bank of the river and the opening of a floating bridge connecting it to the left bank, families arrived in the thousands and we managed to arrest hundreds of infiltrating terrorists. We also saved many people who were arrested because their names were similar to a terrorist's. Because we knew the detainee personally and were sure that he did not deal with Daesh, we provided evidence and witnesses to our brothers in the security checks and saved the person from arrest. The families were grateful for the role we played.

Unipath: After the battles ended and security returned, are you still providing security in your areas?

Sheikh Khalid: At the beginning of the battles, we worked with our brothers in the liberation forces to complete searches and clearances to ensure there are no terrorists left. Then as we progressed toward other areas, we were tasked by CJOC to hold ground and protect the rear of the advancing forces. We held this ground for more than six months, maintaining security without any formal military presence. These villages had a bridge that was a major supply line for advancing forces. Daesh tried to attack us and cut off the road during the height of fighting on the right bank. We managed to spoil the plan, killing four of them in an exchange of fire. We repelled several attacks and maintained security of our areas during that period. Now we have high-level coordination with security forces to monitor and track sleeper cells and extend security.

Unipath: Children and widows lived under the thumb of terrorists. Has the tribe paid attention to these people?

Sheikh Khalid: We are Arab tribes, and our customs and traditions cannot allow the presence of a needy family or children starving. In my role as sheikh and within our villages, we recognize needy families, widows and orphans and provide them with everything they need. Our doors are always open to them. We give help to children who have been brainwashed or witnessed terrorists murdering people on the streets. Thankfully, this issue is under control in villages where tribes run things. We are looking to solve the problem of displaced people who are still in the camps. Yes, there are services and welfare from the state, but how long will they stay in the tents?

Unipath: Why did they not return to their homes with the rest of the displaced?

Sheikh Khalid: Some of them live in areas near the Syrian border where security is still fragile and the government has concerns about allowing citizens to return. Other families have relatives who joined Daesh and have committed crimes against civilians. And their hometowns do not allow them to return. Even we do not allow the families of those who have committed crimes in our villages to return. Of course, we have the flexibility to deal with families whose children were outside the control of the family. And a wife, children and tribe cannot be held accountable for their relatives who committed terrorist acts. But sometimes families were supportive and aided their sons to commit crimes themselves — these have no place among the tribes.


In the end, I would like to thank the international coalition, headed by the United States of America, which has saved us from Daesh and supported us by all means to liberate our lands from their abomination. They did an honorable job of arming, training and supporting our troops during the fighting. ♦



CYBER DEFENDERS




**QATAR'S
COMPUTER
EMERGENCY
RESPONSE
TEAM BUILDS
RESILIENCE
AGAINST ONLINE
THREATS**





Doha, Qatar



As Qatar's dependence on cyberspace and information technology grows, the resilience and security of this infrastructure become ever more important. The government of Qatar has realized the need for driving the adoption of cyber security and safety within the nation and has been working tactically to address prevalent threats.

Qatar's 2030 vision lists a number of strategic areas of importance to the nation, some of which prioritize cyber safety and security. The main areas addressed strategically are the following:

- **Human development:** Within this category is a requirement to provide education responding to current and future needs of the labor market. This includes grooming a technological and security-savvy workforce. A key requirement is providing certification and training to the local population.
- **Social development:** Qatar emphasizes maintaining a secure, confident and stable society. This requires a set of frameworks and ecosystems that would allow social development to thrive online.
- **Economic development:** It is important to maintain financial and economic stability by having a secure and efficient financial system and energy sector. Qatar derives much of its economic activity from energy exports, and this part of the economy must be made resilient against cyber threats.

Leading the way is Qatar's Computer Emergency Response Team (Q-CERT). It was formed in 2005 to catalyze change, specifically to accelerate the widespread availability and adoption of effective cyber security measures, practices and policies.

Since its establishment, the Q-CERT team has gone from being a department that coordinates responses to internet security incidents to a complete division working on initiatives that take a proactive approach to secure the nation.

With the aim of providing a wide range of specialized services, Q-CERT has succeeded in delivering over 17 different information security services to meet the needs of constituents. Some of these services include incident response, forensics, malware analysis, technical security assessments, cyber security workforce development training, specialized security advice and cyber security awareness. Services keeps increasing according to the needs of the national market in the field of cyber security.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

The total number of incidents triaged by the team in the past three years has reached 2,945. This tally is governed by many factors, some of which are the

increasing number of threats. Other factors may be a better knowledge of the cyber security team's work in this area and higher information security maturity levels by professionals in other organizations; hence, more incidents are reported.

CYBER SECURITY INTELLIGENCE

To stay vigilant against possible cyber threats, Q-CERT has developed state of the art solutions that focus on monitoring and studying the cyber threat landscape in addition to developing security analysis tools that help in threat detection.

The threat monitoring system was internally developed by the cyber security team in 2011. The system collects threat information worldwide, aggregates and parses those feeds and analyzes them for threats relevant to the nation.

To help counteract those threats, alerts are sent to government and other owners of infrastructure that may be targeted. The collection of data occurs through agreements with international organizations, vendors and international government organizations. The threat monitoring system is capable of processing tens of millions of records.

Over three years, more than 951 million records of threat information were processed. Threats detected and discovered in Qatar during these years reached 4.77 million infections covering home and corporate networks. In response, Qatar sent over 100,000 possible threat alerts to notify Q-CERT's incident handling team to start verification and investigation and implement countermeasures. Q-CERT also performed Domain Name System (DNS) log analysis for over 50 organizations, processing over 650 million DNS records.

CYBER RESILIENCE

The cyber resilience function within Q-CERT provides organizations in Qatar with proactive measures to ensure security and resilience in information systems.

Cyber resilience developed its own technical security assessment framework, derived from international standards and methodologies such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Open Web Application Security Project. Based on these frameworks, technical and governance assessments are offered to constituents. Technical security assessments consist of: vulnerability assessments, penetration testing and initial vulnerability scanning. New governance assessment services were developed and launched in 2014, such as Network Design Review and National Information Assurance Baseline Assessments.

Ninety-seven technical security assessments

were conducted for critical sector organizations in the past three years. Vulnerability assessments were most popular, followed by penetration testing. These numbers rely on the demand from constituents for these services. Moreover, the cyber security division conducted special projects to verify compliance and alignment with the National Information Assurance Policy such as conducting Physical Security Assessment of a Data Center facilitator.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Working with stakeholders, the team has developed solutions to help organizations achieve dramatic improvements in their cyber workforce development programs. The team provides organizations with technical programs and awareness content needed to develop and maintain a competent, skilled and effective cyber workforce.

Over three years, the team successfully held 18 technical and management information security courses through its partnerships with several international institutes. Those courses mainly targeted government entities and critical infrastructure organizations. The total number of attendees was 365 — 87.5 percent of them Qatari nationals. Two-thirds of the Qataris came from the government sector.

INFORMATION SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT

To better support constituents and organizations in Qatar, the cyber security team has developed the Information Security Risk Management Framework. It is a structured yet flexible approach and can be aligned with the overall risk management framework of an enterprise. It provides agencies with a systematic approach to identify, prioritize and manage information security risks and to comply with the requirements of the National Information Assurance Policy.

An in-house toolkit was developed and provided within the framework to optimize information security risk management processes for organizations. This tool drives efficiency into the risk management process, while providing a more defined view into information security risks.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The cyber security team in the Ministry of Transportation and Communications Technology has taken a consultative approach to help organizations quantify and qualify their exposure to cyber threats, business continuity management and emergencies. This approach ensures that critical sector organizations adopt the most appropriate and effective crisis management strategy.

The crisis management function ensures readiness of critical sector organizations by conducting cyber

security exercises at sector and national levels.

The cyber security team has conducted a series of cyber drills. The first one, Star-1, occurred in 2013 with an objective to institutionalize the fundamental knowledge of incident handling, crisis communication and situational awareness among critical sector organizations.

After the success of the first exercise, a more holistic one, Star-2, brought together 40 participating organizations from the government, financial, energy, health care, transportation, utilities and telecommunications sectors. In 2017, Star-5 focused on crises management and continuity with almost 75 participants representing various critical sectors, and the plan for 2018 is to develop scenarios to assess Qatar's readiness to host FIFA's 2022 World Cup soccer tournament.

IDENTIFYING KEY PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Eight years ago, Qatar enacted e-commerce and transactions law No. 16 of 2010, which mandates that the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology regulate electronic signatures and digital certification. In this regard, the ministry represents the Policy Management Authority (PMA), which is responsible for licensing and supervising certification service providers in Qatar. It also manages the National Root Certification Authority (NR-CA).

Also, owing to the absence of a national accreditation body in Qatar, PMA will play the role of the Conformity Assessment Bodies Authorizing Authority. PMA is responsible for encouraging the international recognition of the Qatari NR-CA and the approval of foreign certification services through cross-certification.

The cyber security team has received the first application of a certification service provider, audited the applicant through a third-party reviewer, and issued the final report to the PMA steering committee and the minister.

In December 2014, the minister of information and communications technology signed the first certified service provider license to be issued in Qatar. The license is issued to the Ministry of the Interior, which is authorized to provide all necessary services, including maintaining an infrastructure for public keys, providing electronic signature services, and issuing digital certificates.

In Qatar's cyber security sector, the Q-CERT team proactively and reactively addresses risks that may arise with technology. The team aims to identify, validate, promote and sustain the adoption of cyber security best practices using well-trained people, technology and policies. Q-CERT hopes to create a world in which cyber security best practices are universal. ♦







SHAPING

Social Media

DEFEATING TERRORIST
MESSAGING REQUIRES
DELETING OFFENSIVE
CONTENT AND DEVISING
COUNTERNARRATIVES

UNIPATH STAFF

Daesh suffered crushing defeats on the battlefields of Iraq and Syria in 2017, but there's one battlefield on which the terrorists still operate without fear.

In the summer of 2018 — a full year after Daesh was driven from some of its last strongholds in Mosul — the terrorist group continued to spread its message of hate across some of the internet's most popular platforms.

YouTube is a format most associated with fun and informative videos produced by teens and young adults, but Daesh messaging crept onto the platform continuously in the first half of 2018.

UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION

According to the Counter Extremism Project, in the spring of 2018 alone, Daesh and its collaborators uploaded 1,348 YouTube videos.

Even though YouTube's parent company Google managed to pull down the videos after a couple of hours, the damage was done: Those videos attracted 163,391 views before they were yanked from the platform.

"That's a lot eyes on those videos," said Hany Farid, a researcher at the Counter Extremism Project.

For all its benefits, social media in the form of Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and their imitators have been manipulated by some of the world's most vicious extremists to indoctrinate and recruit youths around the world.

Governments have reacted in many ways to the proliferation of these terrorist hate messages. Many have blocked popular websites or temporarily banned citizens from using the internet entirely.

Such measures are reinforced by the internet companies themselves, which, pressured by counterterrorism agencies, have strived to expunge propaganda from their sites.

Another promising innovation is "artificial intelligence" that purports to pinpoint terrorist material and remove it from the internet with minimal human involvement.

But there's a growing suspicion that a heavy-handed approach that harms the innocent and guilty alike does more harm than good. Governments are increasingly turning to the creation of counternarratives to confront the extremists wherever they lurk in cyberspace.

Since policing the internet is ultimately insufficient as extremists bore more deeply into the dark crevasses of the web, these counternarratives promise to have the greatest reach and influence globally.

"Merely banning social media platforms is not enough," said Maqsood Kruse, executive director of Hedayah, the counterterrorism center based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). "We must also be able to build our social media outreach for a counternarrative."

POLICING METHODS

Most governments of the Middle East and South and Central Asia have used various methods to block, ban and filter terrorist content on the internet. Such methods — if restricted to violent extremists and not misused to censor and persecute innocent citizens — is a necessary first stop to blunting terrorist recruitment.

But loads of propaganda videos manage to skirt the attention of the authorities. The quantity of material available on social media is simply too vast to police effectively. Terrorists not only disguise their material to slip it onto mainstream websites but also revert to closed

networks on the darknet to transmit hateful messages.

Relatively new services such as Google Drive accept thousands of hours of mostly unmonitored video, including that created by terrorists. Experts have counted at least 400 websites on which Daesh has posted videos. Some of these include step-by-step instructions on how to make bombs.

Nikita Malik, author of a recent research paper for the London-based Centre on Radicalisation and Terrorism, said violent extremists have become creative in avoiding scrutiny by counterterrorism services. They use the internet not just for messaging but to raise money through shadowy cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin.

"We have denied Islamic State territory in the real world, but it has a whole new safe haven in cyberspace, which we need first to understand and then to close down," Malik told *The Guardian* newspaper. "The authorities must move urgently to increase their knowledge of terrorists' activities in cyberspace and their use of technologies such as bitcoin. Regulation in this area has to move carefully if we are to balance liberties with guarding against threats to our security — but the time has come to deny extremists the space they need online to plan fresh atrocities."

Great Britain claimed success in the use of what it called artificial intelligence to eliminate Daesh recruitment material from hundreds of websites across the internet. The developers used 1,000 existing Daesh videos to "train" the computer program to recognize Daesh content on the internet, and they claim the technology has achieved a 94 percent success rate. The tool will aid the authorities in removing Daesh content from more obscure platforms such as Vimeo, Telegram and pCloud.

Internet companies have begun policing themselves using, in most cases, their own proprietary "fingerprinting" technology to detect key words and themes popular with terrorists.

In 2017, Microsoft, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter formed the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism with the goal of sharing technology and best practices to remove content from violent extremists. Other social media companies such as LinkedIn, Instagram and Snap have since joined the forum.

"Governments and telecommunication companies have a role to play in educating the public on the danger posed by terrorist organizations who use the social media platforms to recruit individuals and promote hatred," said Salem Al Za'abi, head of UAE National Counter-Terrorism Committee.

DESIGNING COUNTERNARRATIVES

While important, removing extremist content from online forums isn't enough. Countries must design

FOUR TRENDS IN WEB-BASED COUNTERTERRORISM

1. **DISRUPTING** — Blocking distribution, deleting content, banning websites.
2. **REDIRECTING** — Steering viewers of terrorist material to countermessaging sites.
3. **COUNTERMESSAGING** — Devising and implementing campaigns that offer alternative viewpoints to violent extremism.
4. **SYNCHRONIZING** — Multinational coordination to ensure messaging is practical, consistent and effective.

Source: European Union

counternarratives that not only refute the content of terrorist recruitment videos but do so in a way to attract the eyes of jaded young men who may be suspicious of older authority figures.

To conduct this form of strategic communication, countries have enlisted techniques borrowed from fields as diverse as psychology, advertising, theology and communications. In some cases, would-be terrorists surfing the web for extremist content are redirected to counterterrorism websites.

Hedayah acts as a clearing house for counterterrorism research. It hosts a counternarrative library that directs users to hundreds of pages of content already available on the internet, including movies, TV shows, books, cartoons, videos, news articles and blogs. In Europe, an organization called the Radicalisation Awareness Network provides a similar service.

“Why is it that when these terrorist groups create a social media message, it resonates with some of us and not with some others? The answer is simple, it is the content,” Kruse said. “So we need to create a better idea that resonates more. In this competition of ideas, we need to be innovative, creative and visionary.”

But tailoring a counterterrorism campaign for a diverse audience is difficult. Although the goal is to discredit and demystify violent extremism using ideology, morality, logic or facts, not every message or method resonates with every person.

For example, social media that might dissuade an

unhappy teen looking for adventure in Syria would have little power to change the mind of a hardened criminal. A third-generation European from Paris might respond differently to countermessaging than an uneducated Afghan from a remote village.

To use the language of marketing, counterterrorism media campaigns often entail deterring “consumers” from “buying” a terrorist organization’s “brand.”

“Counter-narrative centric strategies are inherently defensive and reactive; they depend on the adversary’s messaging in order to craft its own messaging. Consequently, the adversary tends to not only initiate but shape the pace and nature of the information contest,” noted the authors of a November 2017 European Union research paper called “Countering Terrorist Narratives.”

Experts suggest the best campaigns relentlessly transmit thematically varied messages across multiple platforms, but ensure those messages coalesce around a simple, overarching narrative.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security enlists American college students — from the same age group as many terrorist recruits — to fine tune its counterterrorism messaging.

A program called Peer to Peer: Challenging Extremism invited dozens of universities to develop social media campaigns to blunt terrorist recruitment. The result were innovative websites that used forums such as video games and music to transmit their counterextremist message. The winning school earned a \$5,000 prize.

“The program addresses two fundamental things,” said George Selim of the Department of Homeland Security. “It brings real-world national security problems to the classroom, and it gives young people a chance to have their voices heard.”

A combination of harder approaches — deleting and disrupting social media that incites violence — and softer approaches — launching web-based counternarratives — need to be part of every society’s counterterrorism toolkit.

“Where these awful crimes are facilitated by the use of social media, we want to close down the criminals’ ability to communicate,” said Max Hill, a prosecutor who served as Great Britain’s independent reviewer of terrorism legislation.

“And yet, we must recognize that policing the internet, and controlling social media comes at a very high price if it interferes with the freedom of communication which every citizen enjoys.” ♦



Inspiring Loyalty



Lt. Gen. Bismillah
Waziri commands
the Afghan National
Army Special
Operations Corps

UNIPATH STAFF

For years, as some of the most trusted Soldiers in Afghanistan, Afghan National Army Special Operations commandos were summoned for such conventional duties as manning roadblocks and security checkpoints. Lt. Gen. Bismillah Waziri felt such ordinary missions — though critically important — failed to adequately use the talents and training of Afghan commandos noted for their mobility and flexibility. Promoted to his current rank in 2018 in command of his country's special operations forces, Gen. Waziri aims to wield his troops mostly as an offensive force adept at raids, assaults on terrorist positions and rescue operations.

The Afghan government is endorsing the same strategy, having announced the expansion of Gen. Waziri's corps to 30,000 troops and increasing the size of the Afghan Air Force to provide extra support for these elite fighters.

"Enemies are scared when they hear the name 'commandos,'" the general said.

Gen. Waziri was born in Kabul in 1966 and grew up in nearby Paktia province. As a young recruit he attended military school in Afghanistan and graduated in 1985 with a bachelor's degree from the Infantry Department of the National Military Academy of Afghanistan.

From 1986 to 1987 he served as a company commander for the Ministry of Defense, and from 1990 to 1992 as chief of staff of the Reconnaissance Detachment of the 9th Infantry Division. The Taliban years curtailed his military career, but the post-Taliban Afghan Ministry of Defense appointed him a battalion commander in 2004.

Afghan National Army commando training in 2007 led to his assignment as commander of the 3rd Commando Battalion in Kandahar province. He assumed the top position in the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC) in 2015.

"ANASOC grew from a battalion to a division, and then a division to a corps. The transformation to a corps was based on needs and effectiveness of our forces," Gen. Waziri said.

“Our growth is based on our four year plan, and we are on track with our growth plan. We don’t have any problems, and the international community is supporting and equipping us. Afghan youth are very interested in joining our forces, so our recruiting is on track with the growth plan.”

The general divides his forces into three main groupings: “special forces” that conduct pinpoint raids, “commandos” that clear enemy positions in support of regular Afghan Army forces, and mobile strike forces complete with armored vehicles and superior firepower. ANASOC also hosts a School of Excellence to enhance the training of its forces.

The ANASOC’s unofficial motto is to be ready for any mission, anytime, anywhere. Afghanistan’s international military partners have helped with that preparation. At Camp Commando near Kabul, trainers from countries such as the United States, Poland, Slovakia and Spain have lent expertise acquired as part of NATO.

Some training occurs abroad. A unit of Afghan commandos traveled to the U.S. in September 2018 to participate in U.S. Central Command’s Regional Cooperation 18 exercise. The staff training — centered on directing operations at a multinational Special Operations Task Force Headquarters — provided Afghans the opportunity to cooperate with U.S., Uzbek, Tajik and Mongolian troops.

The acquisition of new attack helicopters and multipurpose Super Tucano warplanes provides Afghan forces aerial advantages, allowing Gen. Waziri’s troops a maneuverability the enemies of Afghanistan cannot match.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has expressed his desire that the Afghan National Security Force boost offensive operations against the Taliban with the aim of forcing them to reconcile with Afghanistan’s elected government.

Gen. Waziri notes that intense fighting has occurred in all parts of Afghanistan — Faryab, Helmand, Kunduz, Ghazni and Nangarhar provinces — highlighting his forces’ geographical reach.

In Nangarhar, Afghan commandos smashed ISIS-Khorasan’s attempt to create a self-proclaimed “caliphate” after the terrorist organization suffered crushing setbacks in Iraq and Syria.

Gen. Waziri places great stock in being an inspirational leader. For example, at a graduation ceremony of 980 commandos in May 2018, he personally addressed his men and paraded a thoroughbred horse captured from an ISIS terrorist leader.

His personal credo is never to ask his troops to do anything he would not do himself. Personal and professional ethics are paramount.

Recruits appear to be responding. The ANASOC has enlisted the first of more than 10,000 Soldiers it needs to supplement its ranks and complete the compulsory 14-week Commando Qualification Course at Camp Commando.

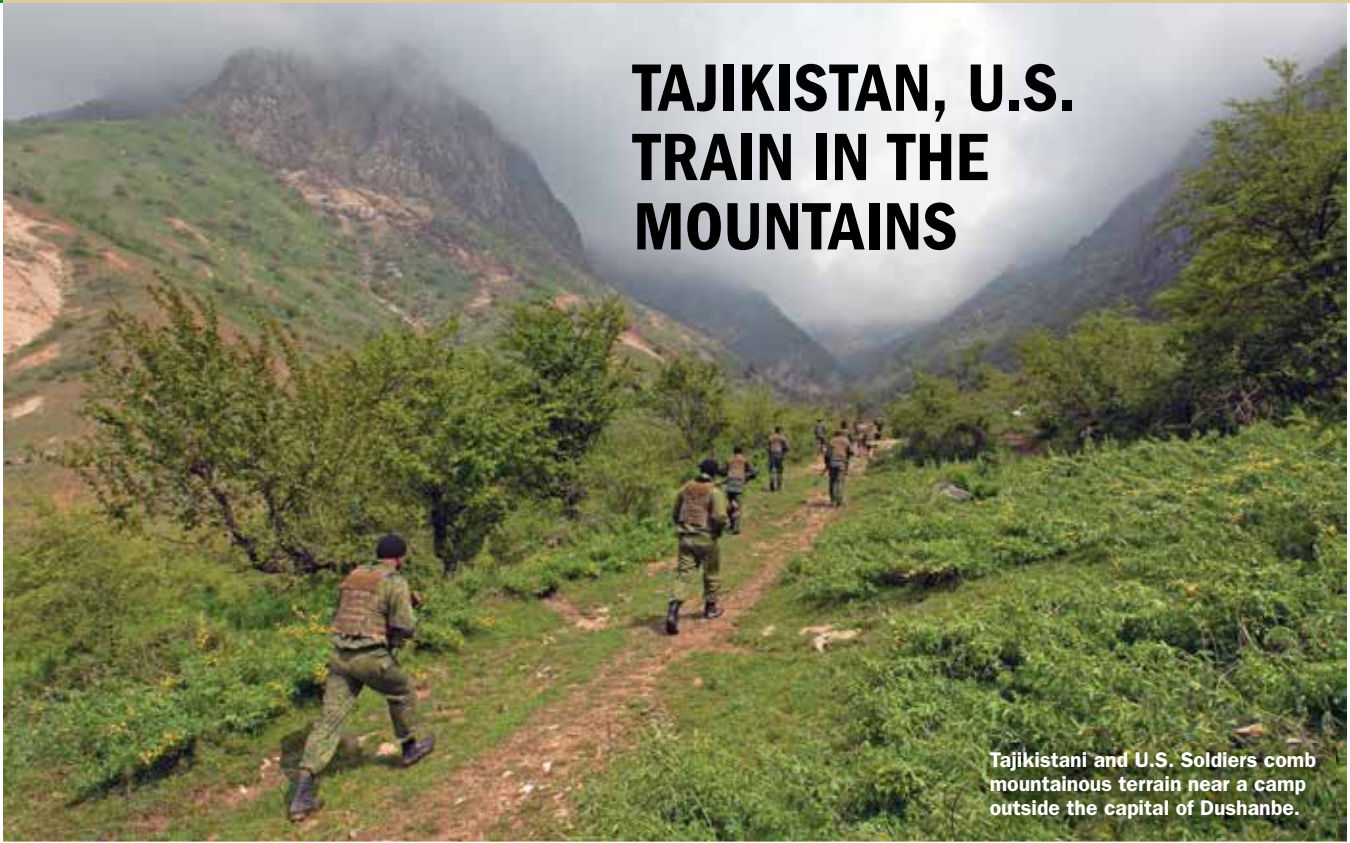
As the general told the graduates in May 2018: “This is a huge responsibility. You are the best Afghanistan has to offer against dark forces. ... Because of you, many sleep well at night knowing you are now their defenders.”

“*This is a huge responsibility. You are the best Afghanistan has to offer against dark forces. ... Because of you, many sleep well at night knowing you are now their defenders.*”

— Lt. Gen. Bismillah Waziri addressing commando graduates in May 2018



TAJIKISTAN, U.S. TRAIN IN THE MOUNTAINS



Tajikistani and U.S. Soldiers comb mountainous terrain near a camp outside the capital of Dushanbe.

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY SGT. 1ST CLASS TY MCNEELEY/U.S. ARMY

Tajik and U.S. Army troops spent three weeks together in April 2018 sharing border security and mountain warfare skills. The engagement culminated in joint missions between the Tajikistan Peacekeeping Battalion of the Mobile Forces and the 648th Military Engagement Team of the Georgia Army National Guard.

“The Soldiers who have come here have good experience of field training exercises,” said Capt. Islomzoda Fakhriddin, commander of the Tajik peacekeeping battalion. “Most of them have taken part in combat field training and actual combat. ... It’s a great honor for us to get to train along with them.”

The Soldiers needed to negotiate Tajikistan’s mountainous terrain. Mountain climbing and rappelling — often toting heavy gear — was part of the mix. The Americans appreciated how their Tajik

partners prepared for the often harsh conditions at high elevations.

“We came into this expecting a little bit of rain up here; we were definitely surprised this morning when we drove up and there was a significant amount of snow on the ground,” U.S. Army 1st Lt. Gregory Wilcoxon said. “The Tajiks understand certainly that the weather isn’t always going to cooperate, and that can affect what we do.”

In one 24-hour mission with their U.S. partners, the Tajiks conducted reconnaissance to capture would-be terrorists who had scrambled into a valley to avoid a traffic control point.

“This is ... one of the ways that we can build a good relationship, by exchanging our tactical trainings,” Capt. Fakhriddin said. “And in the future, I want these kinds of exercises to be conducted more often, especially in such terrain.”

Source: U.S. Army Central



A Soldier with the Tajikistan Peacekeeping Battalion of the Mobile Forces practices rappelling with U.S. partners.



Securing Electricity in Afghanistan

UNIPATH STAFF

Afghanistan's efforts to restore electricity to underserved citizens improved dramatically with the approval of a new energy agreement with Uzbekistan in October 2018.

Uzbekistan's national energy company, Uzbekenergo, will help modernize Afghanistan's electrical grid by building a \$150 million transmission line from Surkhan in Uzbekistan to Puli-Khumri in northern Afghanistan.

Although Uzbekistan has supplied Afghanistan with electricity since 2002, connections have been insufficient to cover the whole country. In 2017, Afghanistan signed a contract with Uzbekistan to buy nearly 2 billion kilowatt hours of electricity and have transmitted some of that power through lines in Tajikistan.

Central Asian states have increasingly integrated their electrical networks and await infrastructure improvements to sell more of their surplus power to Afghanistan.

Uzbekenergo sees itself as a hub of a regional power grid that can supply electricity to underserved areas. It estimates the new Afghan power lines could boost Uzbek electricity exports by 70 percent.

From the point of view of the government in Kabul, providing critical services to distant provinces would help unite a country in which extremists like the Taliban try to incite popular discontent.

The new power line to Afghanistan would also allow the Hairatan-Mazar-i-Sharif railroad between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan to switch from diesel to electric locomotives, reducing the cost of cargo. Sources: Novosti Uzbekistana, Eurasia Daily, Trend News Agency

Afghan children play under power lines near Kabul. The country is signing deals with neighbors to supply electricity to underserved regions susceptible to radicalization.

REUTERS

KUWAIT OPENS MILITARY AIRPORT

UNIPATH STAFF

The largest military cargo hub in the Middle East opened in Kuwait City in the second half of 2018. "Cargo City" will serve the Kuwait Air Force and U.S. and coalition forces as a military logistics point. The 33,000-square-meter project cost \$32 million and will serve as a temporary cargo hub until the projected 2023 completion of West Al-Mubarak Air Base.

U.S. Air Force and Army engineers built Cargo City in cooperation with Kuwaiti contractors. The job was immense: Nearly 400 trucks carrying dirt and rock arrived at the site daily for four months.

"During the build process, we were able to form friendships and build bonds with our generous host-nation partners," U.S. Air Force Capt. Sean Murphy said. "We wanted to go into this project with the clear intentions of building not just an operating location, but a lasting partnership."

To make room for construction of Kuwait's new international airport, the Kuwaiti and U.S. air forces were given a year to decamp from their former home, Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base. Cooperation between the two countries made the relocation easier than it might have been.

"Cargo City was built with the intention of being a temporary solution, but will have long-lasting benefits," U.S. Air Force Capt. Jesse Lantz said. "This is one of the projects I am most proud of in my career. The teams here did an incredible job." Source: U.S. Air Force



A U.S. Air Force technician works to complete Cargo City at an air base in Kuwait City.

STAFF SGT. JOSHUA KING/U.S. AIR FORCE



Egypt's Growing Naval Clout

UNIPATH STAFF

Egypt's Navy engaged in a joint exercise with Saudi, Emirati and U.S. warships in the Red Sea in July 2018. Mine sweeping and boarding and inspecting ships were the focus of training.

But that midsummer exercise — dubbed Eagle Response 2018 — is becoming almost routine for Cairo's military planners.

Egyptian naval forces conducted many exercises with Middle Eastern and European partners throughout 2018, a shift in focus for a nation best-known as a land power.

The Medusa naval drills — held with Greece and Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea — and the Cleopatra drills — held with France in the Red Sea — were two of several ongoing cooperative exercises in 2018.

And a couple of weeks before Eagle Response, British warships joined Egyptian counterparts for counterterrorism drills in the Mediterranean that included intercepting and destroying hostile targets. A month earlier, in June 2018, it was the Spanish Navy's turn to train with Egypt, in the Mediterranean and Red seas.

"Strategically, the exercises aimed to enhance the ability to protect vital targets from the unconventional threats that have emerged in the region during recent years," Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* noted in a July 2018 article.

Among Arab-speaking nations, Egypt possesses the largest navy. It has spent the past several years acquiring new ships and weaponry to defend such vital international waterways as the Suez Canal.

In addition, discoveries of new underwater natural gas fields, maritime drug and weapons smuggling and illegal migration have increased the demands on naval forces in the region. Source: *Al-Ahram*

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi celebrates Egyptian Navy Day in Alexandria beside one of his Navy's newest warships.

APA IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

PAKISTAN PRAISED FOR PEACEKEEPING

UNIPATH STAFF

On a July 2018 visit to Pakistan's Centre for International Peace and Stability, United Nations Undersecretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix honored the sacrifices of Pakistani troops involved in dozens of U.N. peacekeeping missions.

The peace center opened in 2013 under the auspices of U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to train domestic and international peacekeepers. Lacroix is responsible for peacekeeping operations at the U.N., and paid homage to the 156 Pakistanis who died on such overseas missions.

"Pakistani Army and Armed Forces' contributions to our missions are really making a difference, and we think it's an outstanding contribution to the cause of peace and stability in the world," Lacroix said during a visit earlier that day with Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Gen. Javed Qamar Bajwa.

Pakistani officials reiterated their commitment to multinational cooperation. Interim Foreign Minister Abdullah Haroon noted that Pakistan's involvement with the U.N. was a vital component of its foreign policy.

Pakistan is among the world's largest troop contributors to U.N. peacekeeping missions. As of the summer of 2018, more than 6,000 of its personnel were found in countries such as Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sources: *Pakistan Today*, United Nations



An Estonian peacekeeper trains Lebanese troops to foil IEDs.
UNIFIL

Avoiding Explosives in Lebanon

UNIPATH STAFF

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is providing training and instruction to Soldiers and civilians to detect and avoid land mines and improvised explosive devices.

The 10,500-strong multinational peacekeeping force recently celebrated its 40th anniversary policing southern Lebanon, a region still suffering the effects of decades of conflict.

UNIFIL and its Lebanese partners conduct “Mine Risk Education” days that entail instructing thousands of South Lebanese schoolchildren to avoid mines and unexploded ordnance.

“Land mines and other explosive remnants of war not only endanger the lives of UNIFIL personnel, but also of local populations throughout south Lebanon,” UNIFIL Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Beary said.

United Nations troops also train Lebanese Armed Forces Soldiers in detecting and disarming improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

For example, in July 2018, Estonian peacekeepers instructed Lebanese troops in detecting IEDs using metal detectors on stationary cars and spray paint to mark cleared areas. The goal was to improve military safety during patrols in southern Lebanon. Source: UNIFIL

GUARDING BORDERS IN CENTRAL ASIA

SALTANAT BERDIKEEVA

Located in a region whose remote mountains and deserts can conceal terrorists, opium traffickers and other criminals, Turkmenistan hosted a workshop in May 2018 dedicated to improved border security.

Border security officials from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and experts from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations participated in the workshop.

Attendees noted that, despite the

importance of guarding borders in a region prone to illegal crossings and smuggling, Central Asian states had yet to adopt a unified vision of border security.

The focus of the meeting was on best practices in cross-border partnerships and discussions about international and regional legal and policy matters related to border security management.

“The exchange of views and experiences between experts and the border guard officers on border security issues contributes to a better

understanding of the many factors affecting state border security,” said Ambassador Natalya Drozd, head of the OSCE Center in Ashgabat.

Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov has focused on his country’s border, declaring in 2018 that it “must always remain a border of friendship with all neighboring countries.” Turkmenistan shares borders with Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, and maritime boundaries on the Caspian Sea with Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan and Russia. Sources: Avesta.tj, Trend.az



Kazakhstan Promotes Defense Industry

UNIPATH STAFF

Kazakhstan's Parliament approved a plan to help finance the country's defense industry and lessen reliance on Russian munitions.

The country's Ministry of Defense and Aerospace Industry will provide financial assistance to boost research into science and technology. The money will be generated in part by the sale of unused Soviet-era military equipment.

Vice Minister of Defense and Aerospace Industry Asset Kurgmangaliev said the \$80 million the country hopes to raise with the equipment sales will help fill shortfalls in the national budget and help attract foreign investment.

During the Soviet period, Kazakhstan served as a base for Soviet army units, space projects and nuclear weapons. Although Kazakhstan rid itself of Soviet-era nuclear weapons, plenty of nonnuclear military equipment remained in the country.

According to the Kazakhstan Defense Ministry, the country still has unused ammunition from World War II and plans to sell much of its old military material. Minister of Defense and Aerospace Industry Beibut Atamkulov warned of environmental dangers stemming from antiquated Russian missiles still present in the country.

Sources: Total.kz, Today.kz, Kapital.kz, nti.org

Qatar Expands Military Recruitment

UNIPATH STAFF

Qatar is requiring its young men to serve longer in the military while raising the profile of women in the Armed Forces. The new national service law took effect in April 2018 and requires men ages 18 to 35 to serve a year in the military instead of the previously enacted three or four months.

The Armed Forces have also begun to recruit female volunteers, although women have held desk jobs in the military in the past. Women now can serve in military roles other than administrative.

Qatar introduced male conscription in 2014, and men must apply within two months of turning 18. Avoidance of military service exposes young men to large fines and prison terms.

His Highness Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani of Qatar issued a decree confirming the changes to the national service law.

Other Arabian Gulf states have also introduced or expanded conscription. For example, the United Arab Emirates announced in July 2018 it was lengthening mandatory military service from 12 to 16 months. Its troops, along with those of Saudi Arabia, have been engaged in Yemen.

Sources: *The Independent*, Qatar News Agency



KAZAKHSTAN DEFENSE MINISTRY



JORDAN GUARDS AGAINST WMD

UNIPATH STAFF

Jordan has successfully trained 750 Soldiers and civilians to respond to potential chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosives attacks. Soldiers and emergency workers have received years of training in mass casualty decontamination operations, most recently in cooperation with a mobile training team staffed by the Colorado Army National Guard from the United States.

To increase preparedness to counter weapons of mass destruction (WMD), Jordan received several decontamination systems with support from the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency. What had been lacking was a sufficient number of experienced personnel to operate the decontamination systems.

The Colorado team developed curriculum for 22 courses, training scenarios and a joint military-civilian exercise that engaged more than 30 students from Jordan. Instructors relied on Arabic translators, and training materials appeared in Arabic as well as English. Many students came from the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army Chemical Support Unit and the Jordanian Civil Defense Directorate.

“This has been by far the most important mission of my military career,” U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Russ said in June 2018. “The lessons I have learned will stay with me for the rest of my life.”

The growing Jordanian proficiency in countering WMD led to the opening

The Jordan Armed Forces and the Colorado National Guard conduct a counter-WMD exercise.

STAFF SGT. MICHELLE ALVAREZ-REA/U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD

of a Center of Excellence in Jordan.

“The support we have received from our American partners has been great,” Jordanian Lt. Col. Mirza Hatoqay said.

For the past 25 years, the U.S. National Guard has sponsored the State Partnership Program, which pairs state National Guard units with military units in other countries. The program includes 75 partnerships with 81 nations.

Sources: Jordan News Agency-Petra, U.S. Army and National Guard



KYRGYZSTAN OFFERS CASH FOR WEAPONS

UNIPATH STAFF

Kyrgyzstan will offer money for weapons and explosives poached from the military during past conflicts. This security-enhancing measure, announced by the Kyrgyzstani Ministry of the Interior in August 2018,

Kyrgyz rioters in 2010 carry a rocket-propelled grenade, illegally obtained military equipment the government is trying to buy back. REUTERS

involves police paying citizens \$25 to \$250 for each illegally owned weapon they restore to the government.

Turning in grenade launchers, machine guns and sniper rifles will generate the highest rewards, but Kyrgyzstan will

also offer monetary compensation for hunting rifles and individual hand grenades.

During riots in April and June 2010, which resulted in the resignation of the government, military units reported the loss of an estimated 865 weapons with ammunition. About 350 of those weapons have been recovered.

In addition to collecting illegal military-style weapons, Kyrgyzstan shut down gun stores for part of August and September 2018, during the World Nomad Games and the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States summit. Sources: Azattyk, 24.kg

NATO Seeks Saudi, Omani Cooperation

UNIPATH STAFF

NATO has reiterated its desire for Saudi Arabia and Oman to form a cooperative partnership with the North American-European alliance.

NATO opened a regional center in Kuwait in 2017, part of an effort to increase security cooperation with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the face of threats from Iran.

The alliance's Istanbul Cooperative Initiative of 2004 led to a deeper relationship with Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. But that wasn't the case with the GCC region's biggest military power, Saudi Arabia.

At its Brussels Summit in July 2018, NATO extended a welcome not just to Saudi Arabia but also to Oman, a country that prides itself on staying neutral in regional conflicts.

"Whenever they are ready, we will be ready to welcome them," a senior NATO official told *The National*.

A NATO declaration in Brussels noted that the Kuwait center "allows us to work more closely with partners in the Gulf region to enhance regional security and counter shared threats." That work includes countering terrorism, weapons proliferation and failing states.

"The security of the Gulf is directly linked to the security of all NATO allies," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said at the opening of the Kuwait center. "We share the same aspirations for peace and stability." Sources: NATO, *The National*



NATO-Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Regional Centre in Kuwait City, Kuwait AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Uzbekistan Rehabilitates Accused Extremists

SALTANAT BERDIKEEVA

Uzbekistan has removed thousands of its citizens from blacklists containing names of people accused of extremism. Since 2017, Uzbekistan has rehabilitated or cleared the names of more than 18,000 citizens, providing thousands with jobs and credits to open businesses. Many were readmitted into society after government officials interviewed clergy, citizens groups, relatives and neighbors and determined they posed little threat.

“If we do not show generosity to these people ... and not give them a helping hand, they will remain pariahs of the society,” Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said.

The country stressed the importance of rehabilitating not only militants, but also their families. Children of suspected extremists were provided with opportunities in the arts, sciences and sports.

“If militants and their families are not given a chance to be rehabilitated, they will have nothing left but to join extremist groups in other countries, for example, in Afghanistan,” Uzbek political scientist Umed Asatullayev noted.

In early 2018, Uzbekistan approved a program that emphasizes security, interethnic harmony and religious tolerance. The program includes a policy to engage Uzbek expatriates living and working abroad to lessen the appeal of extremists who prey on them.

“If we do not show generosity to these people ... and not give them a helping hand, they will remain pariahs of the society.”

~ Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev



Iraq, Jordan Sign Security Agreement

UNIPATH STAFF



Then Iraqi Defense Minister Irfan Mahmoud Al Hayali, seated second from right, signs a security agreement with Jordanian Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Freihat, seated second from left.

IRAQI MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

Iraq and Jordan signed a military cooperation agreement in August 2018 to improve joint security in the post-Daesh era.

Then Iraqi Defense Minister Irfan Mahmoud Al Hayali signed the bilateral deal in Amman with Jordanian Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Freihat. Also present at the signing was Iraqi Ambassador to Jordan Safia al-Suhail and senior military officers.

“The agreement aims to exchange expertise and information in the fields of border protection, developing intelligence capabilities, joint military exercises, research and technology development, combating terrorism in various forms, training and development,” the Iraqi Ministry of Defense announced.

The war against Daesh had disrupted trade and communication on the 180-kilometer common border between Iraq and Jordan. The disruption was partly resolved with the reopening of the main border crossing at Trebil, Iraq, in 2017.

Sources: Iraqi Ministry of Defense, Jordan News Agency-Petra



Oman Discusses Security Cooperation

UNIPATH STAFF

Counterterrorism, freedom of navigation, the Yemeni conflict and arms smuggling were discussed during a July 2018 visit to Washington by Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi. He met with top officials, including U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and then Secretary of Defense James Mattis.

The State Department noted that Alawi and Pompeo “affirmed the importance of continued support for the efforts of United Nations Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and emphasized the need for all parties to show restraint to avoid further escalation of hostilities.”

Griffiths has tried to resolve Yemen’s civil war diplomatically, using Muscat as a neutral

intermediary. Oman also favors repairing fractured relations within the Gulf Cooperation Council.

In his meeting with Secretary of Defense Mattis, Foreign Minister Alawi discussed efforts to improve bilateral military cooperation.

Mattis called Oman a vital U.S. security partner and has urged Muscat to continue blocking the use of its borders and waters to smuggle arms to Yemen. Oman’s Foreign Ministry announced that its security relationship with the U.S. remains “exceptional.”

Minister Alawi was in Washington to attend a ministerial meeting to promote religious tolerance and freedom around the world.

Sources: Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U.S. departments of State and Defense



Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi meets with then U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis.

GETTY IMAGES

Egypt Confronts African Terrorism

UNIPATH STAFF

Egypt has built a counterterrorism center to coordinate military action and law enforcement with dozens of its African neighbors. The 14,000-square-meter center in Cairo, which Egypt financed with \$5.6 million, will serve the 29-member Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD).

Egyptian Maj. Gen. Hamdi Bakhit said the center will focus on officer training and intelligence coordination to uproot violent extremism. Egypt promised to sponsor training for military personnel from CEN-SAD members and hold regional counterterrorism military exercises.

“Breaking up and destroying terrorist networks is not easy. But this is the main task of the center, which will be performed by a permanent operation room,” Gen. Hamdi said.

CEN-SAD, the second-largest regional organization in Africa after the African Union, includes nations from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. It was founded in Tripoli, Libya, in 1998 with the aim of preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.

Instability, civil war and terrorism in Libya — Egypt’s western neighbor — have been among the country’s top security concerns. At a CEN-SAD meeting in June 2018, government ministers called for increased collaboration in fighting terrorism in the Sahel-Sahara region. Sources: *Egypt Today*, *Al-Ahram*



BAHRAIN WELCOMES FIRST FEMALE PILOT

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY BAHRAIN DEFENCE FORCE

Sheikha Aisha bint Rashid Al Khalifa — the first Bahraini woman to graduate from the prestigious Royal Military Academy Sandhurst — has established another first for her country.

In July 2018, she became the first woman in her country to pilot a warplane. The historic one-hour flight out of Sheikh Isa Air Base was observed by His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

Prince Khalifa had two reasons for attending — he is one of Bahrain's top government officials and the grandfather of Sheikha Aisha.

The prime minister praised the flight aboard the BAE Hawk as an important first for the Royal Bahraini Air Force, describing it as a “remarkable



accomplishment that embodies determination and the spirit of defiance of Bahraini women.”

Sheikha Aisha follows a trail blazed by Maj. Mariam al-Mansouri, who became the United Arab Emirates' first female fighter pilot in 2007. Maj. al-Mansouri piloted F-16 fighter jets against Daesh in Syria.

The sheikha's attendance at Sandhurst, the military academy in Great Britain, comes with a long pedigree. Many Middle Eastern leaders have received an education there. They include His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein of Jordan and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice president of the United Arab Emirates and ruler of Dubai. Sources: *Emirates Woman*, *Al Bawaba*



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