

Egyptians Hold
Bright Star Exercise

Lessons Learned
From Northern Iraq

Jordanian Military
Assists Afghanistan

UNIPATH

Restoring
Stability





A Pakistani potter at work in Karachi
in January 2019 AFP/GETTY IMAGES



The United Arab Emirates hosts the Big Bad Wolf Book Sale in October 2018. Organizers called the Dubai event the world's biggest book sale. REUTERS

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A Jordanian Soldier holds a displaced Syrian child at a military medical outpost near Mafraq, Jordan, in July 2018.

REUTERS

UNIPATH

Resiliency: Normalization and Stabilization

Volume 9, Number 2



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KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE

I would like to express my gratitude to U.S. Central Command for its kind invitation to be the commander who introduces this edition of *Unipath* magazine, which addresses the importance of achieving stability amid terrorist efforts to upset the security of the region.

Egypt's counterterrorism strategy stems from a firm and steadfast position adopted by the Egyptian Armed Forces. The strategy is based on six pillars.

The first pillar depends on countering extremist/terrorist ideologies with enlightened awareness based on the human principles and values of forgiveness and the concept of tolerance established by all divinely established religions.

The second pillar requires confronting terrorist elements using legitimate measures without excessive use of force, and the third relies on the community's support of state efforts in countering terrorism.

The fourth pillar involves employing a comprehensive approach to address the terrorism problem, without restricting it to the security dimension. This can be fulfilled through improving livelihoods and addressing economic, social and cultural discontents.

The fifth pillar focuses on developing moderate religious rhetoric and promoting the roles of Al-Azhar, universities, think tanks and media in raising awareness and supporting counterterrorism efforts. The sixth and final pillar includes Egypt's active participation in international anti-terrorism alliances and international security conventions to combat terrorism.

Based on this strategy, the Egyptian Armed Forces launched the comprehensive Operation Sinai 2018 to eliminate terrorists in north and central Sinai, desert and mountainous areas on the western side, and some areas of the Nile valley and delta that were terrorist safe havens.

Since its commencement on February 9, 2018, Sinai 2018 has achieved significant results, destroying most of the infrastructure and operational bases of the terror group Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, as well as eliminating most of its capabilities and chasing the remnants that fled.

Our forces also imposed tight security on all main roads and routes in north and central Sinai, along with continuing security measures and destroying remaining terrorist hotbeds and tightening our grip on them.

Our heroic forces continue to conduct strict search and inspection operations to eliminate terrorist elements infiltrating our borders and trafficking weapons and ammunition into Egypt.



To ensure that these gains are maintained, our Armed Forces, in close cooperation with civilian police, continue their fight to uproot terrorism and extremism from north and central Sinai and to strategically secure the western and southern sides of the peninsula. Our forces are determined to achieve the planned objectives of the operation, along with continuing comprehensive Sinai development plans so that its people and the people of Egypt can be safe and secure.

As you know, all terrorist and extremist groups exploit religious misconceptions and misinterpretations and deviate from the teachings of religions. They incite hatred, strife and violence to impose their false vision on societies.

Such groups then escalate their goals, from achieving political and economic interests to attempting to bring down and divide sovereign nation states to establish their so-called caliphate on a large geographic area of the world, including the center of the Islamic and Arab worlds. Thus, terrorism becomes a transborder phenomenon — no single country is safe against its ramifications, regardless of its religion or ethnicity, state of development, or relative wealth or poverty.

Our responsibility has grown more complex as terrorists improve their capabilities and resources. Terrorist groups employ revolutionary technology in communications, information and social media to develop innovative means of disseminating takfiri ideology, recruiting new members and issuing instructions to carry out terrorist operations to terrorize peoples and jeopardize international peace and security.

Combating terrorists and their offshoots requires a firm international position and continuing cooperation, along with regional and international coordination of strategies to confront them. Egypt is committed to countering terrorism in all its forms, addressing its ideological roots, draining its sources of financing, and taking all measures necessary to prevent and combat terrorist crimes, in close collaboration with brotherly and friendly countries.

The message of Islam is a message of peace. In that respect, we object to any attempt to associate terrorism with any religion, ethnicity or culture. Without a doubt, the will and determination of our countries to fight terrorism and extremism will lead to their defeat and protect our homelands and peoples.

Lt. Gen. Mohammed Farid
Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces



BRIGHT

Egypt hosts multilateral military exercise focused on building partnerships and countering terrorism

EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

As the ramps of armored vehicles drop, Soldiers pour into the Egyptian desert and take a position on the battlefield. Movements are sharp and decisive as troops assemble and expertly destroy enemy targets. Firepower from F-16s and Apache helicopters flown by Egyptian and Greek pilots have already weakened the terrorists, paving the way for the ground forces assault.

The professionalism and prowess of multinational forces was clear to military leaders watching the Bright Star 2018 military exercise's combined arms live-fire exercise.

Egypt hosted Bright Star at the Mohammed Naguib Military Base in Egypt's Northern Military Zone. The multilateral exercise, held September 8-20, included troops from Egypt, Jordan,

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Great Britain, Greece, Italy and the United States. Sixteen other countries sent observers.

The combined training events, considered to be among the largest in the region, provided forces with theoretical and practical experience during command post and field training exercises. The focus was to improve regional security and military cooperation and promote interoperability when engaging in irregular warfare.

Maj. Gen. Nasser Al-Assi, director of the Training Authority for the Egyptian Armed Forces, expressed pride in the growth of the exercise between 2017 and 2018.

"Bright Star training is a vivid embodiment of the friendship and cooperative relations between the Egyptian and U.S. armed forces, which



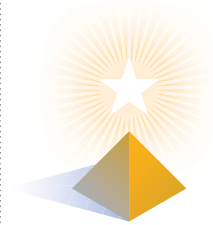
STAR

2018



A Jordanian Soldier takes a position after rappelling from an Egyptian helicopter during urban training at Bright Star.

SENIOR AIRMAN DAWN M. WEBER/
U.S. AIR FORCE



contributes to strengthening the bonds of cooperation and mutual interest to counter terrorism, maintain international peace and security, and unify concepts and the exchange of combat experience of the participating countries.”

Exercise objectives focused on giving multinational forces experiences to overcome these types of real world threats. For example, Soldiers from different countries conducted a joint mission to clear a village of terrorists with an emphasis on protecting civilians trapped there.

“One of the main goals of the Bright Star exercise focused on counterterrorism,” said Egyptian Maj. Gen. Khaled Khairy, Bright Star exercise director. “Terrorism is a chronic disease like cancer, spreading all over the world.”

The first Bright Star exercise was held in the 1980s. The exercise continues to build the strategic security relationship between Egypt and the U.S.

Naval forces, including special forces teams, took part in scenarios to combat asymmetric threats at sea. Teams engaged in multinational visit, board, search and seizure operations and medical support and evacuations. They also prepared to detect and neutralize underwater mines, including underwater explosives detonation.

The exercise also included joint air defense and aerial combat training by air

force elements to defend and attack vital targets and refuel in the air, as well as provide air support to ground forces.

The first Bright Star exercise was held in the 1980s. The exercise continues to build the strategic security relationship between Egypt and the U.S., a historic partnership that both countries embrace to address common security threats. The 2017 exercise was bilateral between Egypt and the U.S., but both countries ensured that the 2018 events included more countries and challenged participants with scenarios relevant to today’s security environment.

Military leaders toured the 2018 exercise to evaluate combat readiness of the forces. These visits included Egyptian Minister of Defense Gen. Mohamed Zaki, Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces Lt. Gen. Mohamed Farid and then Commander of U.S. Central Command Gen. Joseph Votel.

Gen. Votel praised the exercise and the preparations the host country made to ensure it was successful and beneficial for all forces. Lt. Gen. Michael Garrett, then commander of U.S. Army Central, also visited the Joint Training Command Center and War Games Center, where the multinational air and navy command centers were located, as well as the site of the command post exercise.

For the second year in a row, Bright Star included a seminar for senior leaders to share and discuss best practices related to fighting international terrorism and illegal immigration.

The final phase of the exercise was the field training portion, where multimission fighter aircraft carried out reconnaissance missions and aerial bombing against terrorists and enemy convoys.

Col. Nasser bin Hatlin al-Suhaimi, commanding officer of the Saudi forces participating in Bright Star, led teams of paratroopers, special security force units, and observers from ground, air and naval forces. The Saudi Ministry of Defense is focused on building capabilities through participation in

Continued on page 11



SENIOR LEADER MESSAGE

MAJ. GEN. NASSER AL-ASSI, DIRECTOR OF THE TRAINING AUTHORITY, EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

First, I would like to thank you for covering the Bright Star Exercises last year in *Unipath* magazine and for highlighting all the activities of the Bright Star Exercise.

I would like to point out that due to the successes of the 2017 Bright Star training, the training activities have been expanded with an increase in the number of countries participating to include the United States and Egypt along with military units from Greece, Britain, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Italy, France and other countries as observers. The training included combating terrorism, unconventional military drills using live ammunition, as well as various

activities of the naval and air forces that participated in 2018, reflecting the importance of training at Bright Star and making it one of the largest military exercises in the Middle East.

Bright Star exercises have been the leading engagement between U.S. and Egyptian armed forces. Both nations have agreed to exchange leadership and training experiences and conduct joint training. The Bright Star exercise began in 1981 between the United States and Egypt and continued till 2009. The maneuvers were conducted every two years, but were suspended once in 2003, and a second time in 2011 after the January 25

revolution. It resumed in 2017, and this year the Bright Star 2018 training was expanded to include forces from nine countries, and 16 countries were invited as observers. We hope the Bright Star exercise will continue through the coming years.

I would like to offer my sincere appreciation to all military forces that participated in this training and convey the thanks of our leadership in Egypt and the General Command of the Egyptian Armed Forces, and we welcome them at any time to the land of Egypt, as we reaffirm our support of the cooperative military ties with all brotherly and friendly countries.



COMMANDER'S VIEW: EGYPTIAN MAJ. GEN. ALI ADEL ASHMAWY

UNIPATH STAFF

Bright Star was held primarily at the Mohammed Naguib Military Base, the largest such complex in the Middle East and Africa. The base is in Egypt's Northern Military Zone, a region overseen by Maj. Gen. Ali Adel Ashmawy. He was proud of his country's role in planning and executing the exercise — a continuation of Egypt's legacy of military strength.

"Egypt has an army that defends and protects. Egypt will always be at the forefront of the strongest world armies," Maj. Gen. Ali told *Unipath*.

He deemed it an honor for Egypt to cooperate with the United States, which in his view possesses the strongest army in the world. Joining the U.S. military with Egypt's — the most ancient organized military force

in history — is mutually beneficial and strategically important, he explained.

Learning from one another and understanding each other's military processes and capabilities was one of many goals of Bright Star. "When Egypt's military doctrine is united with the United States' military doctrine to protect security and border control of these countries, I believe this benefits all individuals, officers and Soldiers in both armies," he said.

The multinational forces coordinated to standardize concepts and hone skills to combat terrorism and conduct asymmetric warfare through a wide variety of military applications, Maj. Gen. Ali explained. Tasks included administrative support, logistics,

medical evacuations, countering improvised explosive devices, handling maritime security threats, planning and managing joint air operations, and repelling enemy air attacks.

Among the many highlights of the Bright Star 2018 exercise, two important accomplishments stood out for Maj. Gen. Ali: the successful live ammunition portion of the field training exercise and the capture of a terrorist outpost. He also vouched for the importance of the command post exercise and the senior leader seminar.

"I would like to give my thanks, appreciation and respect to all Egyptian forces and troops, officers and Soldiers who participated in this training," Maj. Gen. Ali said.

Egyptian Northern Military Zone Commander Maj. Gen. Ali Adel Ashmawy meets then U.S. Army Central Commander Lt. Gen. Michael Garrett.

EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

Continued from page 8

such exercises to increase the combat readiness of Saudi forces, he said.

Bright Star 2018 highlighted the military skills of participating forces. Armed anti-tank helicopters destroyed hostile targets and carried out advanced attacks against terrorist groups. Meanwhile, mechanized and armored detachments from Egypt, Jordan and the U.S. were dispatched to complete the mission and destroy all enemy targets.

Jordan Armed Forces Col. Nizar Soub, commander of Jordanian forces at the exercise, extolled the strategic value of international maneuvers like Bright Star. Forces from Jordan and other countries trained to overcome asymmetric threats, such as clearing terrorist strongholds or securing villages from terrorist attacks. Troops also focused on more conventional military tasks such as border control and maritime security.

Leaders anticipate that Bright Star 2020 will be even more successful. Nasser Military Academy Military Advisor Maj. Gen. Hisham Al Halabi said: “We are looking at maneuvers that began big and strong and which have continued to grow in terms of the numbers of participants, the types of training exercises and the kinds of arms and training programs used.

“Egypt has equipped the Mohammed Naguib Base with state-of-the-art facilities,” he added. “It has outstanding capacities for coordinating between and hosting a large number of participants from different branches of other countries’ military forces.”

The training represents a continuation of the development and strengthening of military relations between Egypt and many Arab and foreign countries. Egyptian military leaders are keen to develop the skills of commanders and officers to maintain combat efficiency and standardize operational concepts with friendly countries.

U.S. Maj. Gen. Jon Mott, U.S. Central Command director of exercises and training, said he was grateful for this opportunity to come together to focus not only on common

interests of regional security and defeating extremist organizations, but also to reaffirm mutual respect and collective friendship.

“We are all stronger as a team, and we cannot do the work we do without our partners,” Maj. Gen. Mott said.

Bright Star 2018 highlighted the military skills of participating forces. Armed anti-tank helicopters destroyed hostile targets and carried out advanced attacks against terrorist groups.

He continued: “The Egyptians are such gracious hosts, and we have the opportunity to come here and enjoy and learn from their culture, experiences and geography. The world is getting to be a tough neighborhood everywhere. ... No matter where the terrorists are, we are going to be there working together to fight them — whether it’s in the Middle East, whether it’s in Europe or back in the U.S. We need to be able to fight together because the threats are not going away any time soon.” ♦

Sources: Information from *The Jordan Times* and *Asharq Al-Awsat* was used in this report.



BRIGHT STAR

Bright Star 2018 was a complex series of events that required nine months of close planning to execute. Here is a breakdown:



An armored personnel carrier is prepared for loading in Kuwait for shipment to Egypt.

SPC. JOVI PREVOT/
U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

2017

Bright Star 2017, a bilateral exercise, concludes in September 2017

2018

Military officials from Egypt and the United States take part in planning conferences to prepare for Bright Star 2018

Military equipment is offloaded in Egyptian ports



An Egyptian military band welcomes military leaders at Mohammed Naguib Military Base. SGT. FATIMA KONTEH/U.S. ARMY

Gen. Joseph Votel, then commander of U.S. Central Command, and Egyptian senior leaders visit the logistics staging area.

SENIOR AIRMAN AMANDA STANFORD/U.S. AIR FORCE



Military officers attend the opening ceremonies in Egypt.

EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

Egyptian and U.S. officers take part in the command post exercise.

SPC. JOVI PREVOT/U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



Bright Star
holds opening
ceremony

Key military leaders
visit forces during
Bright Star

Command post
exercise



The Bright Star 2018 senior leader seminar included representatives from around the world.

EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES



Egyptian Sailors maneuver a rigid-hull inflatable boat on the Mediterranean Sea.

SENIOR AIRMAN DAWN M. WEBER/U.S. AIR FORCE



An Egyptian armored personnel carrier moves toward its training objective.

STAFF SGT. MATTHEW KEELER/
U.S. ARMY



Egyptian Sailors board a U.S. naval ship during a visit, board, search and seizure exercise.

SENIOR AIRMAN DAWN M. WEBER/U.S. AIR FORCE



Egyptian and Jordanian Soldiers assault a target during field training events.

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

Senior leader seminar

Field training exercises

Maritime exercises



A special operations Soldier provides security during urban terrain training.

SENIOR AIRMAN DAWN M. WEBER/U.S. AIR FORCE



A U.S. Army M1A2 Abrams tank fires during the combined arms live-fire exercise rehearsal at Mohammed Naguib Military Base.

SPC. JOVI PREVOT/U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



Egyptian, Jordanian and U.S. special operations forces complete security checks during field training.

SENIOR AIRMAN DAWN M. WEBER/U.S. AIR FORCE


Special operations forces conduct operations in urban terrain

Combined arms live-fire exercises



An Iraqi special forces Soldier searches a house during the liberation of Mosul.

REUTERS



— HOW TO — DEFEAT DAESH

Iraqis and Jordanians share lessons learned from the victorious campaign against terrorists in Iraq

UNIPATH STAFF

Forces that recently emerged victorious from battle — particularly the triumphant troops of the Iraqi Armed Forces — possess unique knowledge of modern urban warfare often denied troops further removed from the front lines.

How do terrorists entrench themselves in cities? How do you win the trust of populations under occupation? How do you disable hostile technology like enemy drones and improvised explosive devices? How do you conduct psychological operations against violent extremists like Daesh?

Iraqi commanders revealed the answers to such questions at the invitation of the Jordan Armed Forces in November 2018. The setting was a counterterrorism conference in Amman in which officers exchanged lessons learned from the battles against Daesh.

“It is known that terrorist groups entrenched inside urban areas use small groups that have great flexibility to change tactics and maneuver quickly, which is a great challenge for conventional armies, especially those using heavy weapons and aircraft,” said, Gen. Talib Sheghati Alkenani, commander of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service. “It is therefore necessary to rely on light, fast-moving forces equipped with the modern technology to precisely destroy targets.”

It was a message well received by Col. Sufyan Al Sulaihat, commander of Jordan’s King Abdullah II Special Operations Group.

“We pray for Iraqi fighters who were killed in action to defend their nation. They earned their experience in their blood, and they were very generous with sharing their experience,” he said.

“Based on what we learn in this conference, we will review our procedures in offense, defense and conducting operations in urban areas. We always adjust our procedures based on what works and what does not.”

Iraqi commanders imparted their deep knowledge of tactical and psychological efforts to dislodge Daesh from cities such as Mosul.

Maj. Gen. Raad Al-Mohamdawi, director of training at the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service, pledged greater cooperation between special operations forces in Iraq and Jordan. Intelligence and information gathered from the battlefields must be shared quickly to ensure coalition partners benefit from the revelations.

“We have been fighting terror since 2003, and I am confident enough to say that we have become an encyclopedia of counterterrorism warfare,” Maj. Gen. Raad told the assemblage of multinational officers.

U.S. Special Operations Command spent six months ensuring participants from all three countries could attend the Amman conference.

“The conference is the fruit of the partnership between the Jordan Armed Forces and U.S. and Iraqi forces,” said Brig. Gen. Mohammed Al-Thalji,



“We pray for Iraqi fighters who were killed in action to defend their nation.”

~ Col. Sufyan Al Sulaihat, commander of Jordan's King Abdullah II Special Operations Group

Troops with Iraq's Rapid Response unit display portraits of their comrades killed in the battles against Daesh. The Soldiers marched in December 2018 to celebrate the one year anniversary of the victory over Daesh.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

director of training for the Jordan Armed Forces. “The region was sitting on a volcano of terror, and without the support of coalition forces, the situation would get worst.”

The Iraqi delegation to Jordan included Sabah Nouri al-Numman, director of media and psychological operations for the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service.

He shared his experiences developing social media and psychological campaigns to expose the lies of terrorists and facilitate the recapture of Daesh-occupied towns. He described his target audience as three sided: Iraqi fighters, Iraqi citizens and regional observers.

“Our message to our Soldiers is that you are the heroes of Iraq, and the nation entrusts you to protect it,” he said. “Our message to Iraqi

citizens is to reassure them that our security forces will defeat terror and preserve a united Iraq. For the region, we display our unity and rejection of sectarianism.”

Winning the hearts and minds of citizens of terrorist-occupied cities was a challenge. Radios and loudspeakers supplied by coalition partners allowed the Iraqi troops to make announcements to residents over the din of battle. Such announcements dealt with keeping families safe and providing them with escape routes.

Iraqi media also highlighted inspiring stories that undermined Daesh attempts to intimidate local populations.

“We documented and published success stories of humanitarian missions and rescues. In addition, we highlighted the heroic stands of



Iraqi citizens who resisted ISIS and defended their villages,” he said.

“These success stories inspired Iraqis in the denied areas. We are encouraging local citizens to be part of the security effort to keep their neighborhoods safe and deny terrorists a nest from which they can re-emerge.”

Lt. Col. Atef Almaro, commander of the Jordan Armed Forces 2nd Special Unit, expressed gratitude for the real world experience he gained from the Iraqi visitors. That included beneficial information about hybrid warfare in which terrorists used social media, unmanned aerial vehicles and improvised explosive devices to try to thwart Iraqi liberation forces.

“In Jordan we are dealing with isolated terrorist threats, but Iraq conducted full-scale operations against much larger terrorist groups entrenched in urban areas with their own advanced weapons and fighting skills,” Lt. Col. Atef said.

The Jordanians have accumulated lessons of their own to offer partner nations. The kingdom has led the way in counterterrorist messaging, encapsulated in His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein’s Amman Message, which challenges terrorists’ promotion of religious intolerance.

Brig. Gen. Al-Thalji noted that his country has taken the lead in an ideological struggle that complements the heroics of Iraqi forces on the ground.

“We focused our messages on immunizing our citizens from extremist narratives and encouraging tolerance and balance to defeat terror,” the brigadier general said. “Our strategy was very clear — to spread tolerance and deny terrorist ideology access to our security realm.”

Iraqis and Jordanians agreed that military efforts are just part of a greater struggle to earn the loyalty of citizens and deprive terrorists of potential recruits. Terrorism can’t exist without financiers, sympathizers and social media propagandists who exploit poverty, unemployment and illiteracy among the citizenry. Nations must address those underlying contributors to terrorism.

“Defeating terrorism is not only a military objective, but we must build our nation economically and pave the road toward prosperity and stability,” Col. Sufyan said. “In addition, leveraging employment opportunities and proper education will open up horizons for youth to avoid joining extremist groups.”

Iraq’s al-Numman warned the Amman conference attendees that Daesh and its imitators remain a threat to the region and the world. Governments cannot afford to let their guard down.

“Daesh lost the military battle greatly; however, it is still active in the information operations arena. It has shown advancement in the technology and media,” he said. “It focuses on terrorizing citizens and preparing youths for future recruitment. Daesh is still working on rebuilding its capability. It is changing its strategy from holding ground to an insurgency war.”

The conference ended with high hopes from all parties for future cooperation and successful follow-up conferences in Baghdad. Despite the ferocious fighting and casualties, the Counter-Terrorism Service is a much stronger force that has earned respect in Iraq and the region. Iraqi and U.S. forces praised the Jordanian special forces for generously hosting the conference, and left Amman with a desire to reconnect soon. ♦

An Iraqi woman whose five sons were killed by Daesh shops in the liberated city of Mosul in 2018.

REUTERS

A refugee child helps her family pack belongings to return to Mosul after the Iraqi military recaptured the city. Providing civilians with aid reduces the likelihood of a terrorist resurgence.

REUTERS

A FLEXIBLE FORCE

AFGHANISTAN'S GEN. BISMILLAH WAZIRI
IS EXPANDING SPECIAL OPERATIONS
FORCES TO DEFEAT ARMED TERRORISTS

UNIPATH STAFF
PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. FELIX FIGUEROA
U.S. ARMY

AFGHAN GEN. BISMILLAH WAZIRI

is Chief of General Staff of the Afghan National Army. Until recently he commanded the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC), a force that intends to play a larger role in defeating armed extremists in the country. These troops are specially selected and trained to provide a mobile, well-armed force based across Afghanistan for maximum flexibility. The general graciously sat down for an interview with *Unipath*.



Unipath: What is the size and composition of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command?

Gen. Waziri: The latest graduating class of the Commando Qualification Course — the 24th — created approximately 980 new commandos. ANASOC has completed its first phase of commando growth with more than 4,000 new troops. With the goal of creating more mobile strike forces, we activated the first Cobra Strike Kandak, a mobile, well-armed battalion-size unit. The establishment of the Cobra Strike Kandak within ANASOC is part of the Afghan plan to double the size of the Afghan special operations forces.

Unipath: What are ANASOC's duties?

Gen. Waziri: ANASOC defends the rights and principles in the Afghan Constitution and the citizens of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan from terrorist and insurgent violence. ANASOC accomplishes this by organizing, recruiting, manning, training, educating, equipping and employing ANASOC forces throughout Afghanistan in support of the government and national security strategy.

Unipath: What strategies have led to the success of ANASOC?

Gen. Waziri: First, we ensure transparency in everything we do. Additionally, the training that commandos receive at the School of Excellence here at Camp Commando comes from the best special forces partner nations around the world, partner nations such as Spain, Slovakia, Poland and the United States. This sort of training is something the Taliban and ISIS-Khorasan [ISIS-K] cannot stand up to. So, basically, commandos are better trained and better equipped.

Second, we continue to integrate our operations with our Afghan Air Force, which is tripling in size. This is a capability the Taliban or ISIS-K obviously does not have. Our air support is using aircraft such as the: MI-17 helicopter, the MD 5-30 helicopter, the A-29 fixed-wing Super Tucano, and the PC-12 ISR [intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance]. With these aircraft,

we deny Taliban, ISIS-K, and any other anti-government group freedom of movement or safe havens.

Third, to win you must be flexible and adaptable. The enemy will change its tactics, as will we. But we will win because the Afghan people choose their government over the Taliban.

Unipath: What are some of the command's recent accomplishments in defeating terrorists?

Gen. Waziri: First, I want to say that ISIS-K is toxic. The Taliban has no hope, and Afghan commandos and their growth is a good thing for all Afghans and Afghanistan's security and prosperity. Moreover, commandos continue exerting military pressure and launching operations against the Taliban and other terror groups around Afghanistan. Our most intense fighting has been in Faryab, Helmand, Kunduz, Ghazni and Nangarhar provinces. Speaking of Nangarhar, commandos recently destroyed ISIS-K's attempt to create a "caliphate" or "capital." In Badakhshan, the Taliban has recently come to the table with the local committee to discuss peace and reconciliation. To repeat what Ministry of Defense spokesman Gen. Mohammad Radmanesh said during a recent press conference: "It's better for the Taliban to choose peace instead of war."

Unipath: How can your forces help bring stability to Afghanistan?

Gen. Waziri: Our forces bring stability to



Gen. Bismillah Waziri, ANASOC commander, addresses graduates of a special training camp.

Afghans and Afghanistan by constantly staying ready for any mission, anytime, anywhere. The reasons we are successful is we have good training and equipment and partner with NATO forces. We stay away from disputes among political parties so that we're viewed as a professional force without partisan allegiances. Our commander, the president of Afghanistan, and the Ministry of Defense have adopted a four-year road map to bring greater political stability to the country. From the perspective of special operations, this is a promise to the people of Afghanistan to achieve results in taking the fight to the enemy. The road map will be accomplished by 2020.

Unipath: As a military leader, how do you promote professionalism?

Gen. Waziri: We have a School of Excellence that recruits students from training centers, and even after they are deployed, we can bring them back for extra training to increase combat efficiency. In addition, mobile training teams go to units where they are based to assist with training and evaluations. Personally, as a leader, I promote professionalism among my forces by setting an example. I would never ask commandos to do something illegal, immoral or unethical. We are, above all, about transparency. Additionally, I would never ask commandos to take on a mission I myself am not prepared to handle if I had to. We here at ANASOC believe in leading from the front. ♦





TEAMWORK

With a Multinational Twist

TROOPS FROM CENTRAL ASIA AND
AFGHANISTAN COMBINE STRENGTH AT THE
REGIONAL COOPERATION 2018 EXERCISE

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY THOMAS GAGNIER/U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND

The criminal named Abdul Kabeer was running a drug smuggling operation, slipping across an international border in a truck authorized to haul humanitarian aid. Special operations forces received a tip that the aid shipment was a sham and that Kabeer was aligned with terrorists.

The multinational command post flew into action — Afghans, Mongolians, Tajiks, Uzbeks and U.S. forces — and drew up a plan of assault.

Two teams of special forces troops would conceal themselves on hills overlooking the road on which Kabeer's truck approached. With cooperation from conventional forces manning a checkpoint farther down the road, coalition forces planned to intercept Kabeer's truck.

"They have to capture him alive. He's the leader of the smugglers, and we need to get more intelligence from him," Afghan Lt. Col. Abdul Basir Masoud said.



Scripted but realistic scenarios such as these filled five days of a command-post exercise called Regional Cooperation 2018. More than 200 multinational troops assembled at Camp Edwards, a military base in Massachusetts in the United States, to simulate a border stabilization mission complicated by the fact that troops came from different countries and spoke different languages.

In the training scenario, Mongolian, Tajik, Uzbek and U.S. battalions — called Task Force Patriot — were stretched along the border of the hypothetical nations of Registan and Bahoristan. Afghan participants led the Combined Special Operations Task Force that worked in conjunction with Task Force Patriot.

The main task facing exercise participants: Function as a headquarters staff directing the actions of TF Patriot and the Combined Special Operations Task Force. More than 30 Russian and Dari linguists ensured smooth communication whenever the multinational Soldiers, hunched over maps and laptop computers, came up against language barriers.

Absent from Regional Cooperation for several years, Uzbekistan provided highly motivated troops eager to grapple with the scenarios. Uzbekistan had observed the exercise before but never participated directly.

“We are personally very interested in how the exercise is planned, how different it is from our exercises at home — everything new we can learn here to adopt in our own country,” said Lt. Col. Enver Madjitov, senior officer of the Uzbek delegation. “And, of course, we want to meet multinational colleagues.”

U.S. Central Command has sponsored Regional

Cooperation since 2001, but 2018 was the first time exercise planners established the standalone Combined Special Operations Task Force headquarters in addition to the usual brigade headquarters overseeing conventional forces.

Actual Afghan commandos flew to Massachusetts from Kabul to lend the exercise a strong dose of realism in staffing the special operations headquarters, including the presence of a noncommissioned officer.

“Afghanistan is a war-torn country. I’ve experienced different situations in my country that I can pass on to my colleagues at the exercise,” said Lt. Col. Esmatullah Emami of Afghanistan’s Special Operations Command.

The inclusion of special operations troops created new learning opportunities. Exercise planners noticed that commanders of conventional troops initially tried to issue orders directly to special operations troops, but, as in real life, were told to coordinate the request through special operations’ chain of command. On the other hand, special operations troops seeking airlift assistance had to request helicopters and transport planes from conventional forces.

“This training is relevant to my duties in Afghanistan,” Afghan Special Forces Maj. Mohammed Nazir Saleh said. “I’ve shared my experiences as a special operations officer with these other countries and the U.S.”

Tajik Col. Anvar Ahmadjonzoda also stressed the importance of teamwork and sharing military experiences. He appreciated that the terrain of the fictional countries — plenty of mountains split by river valleys — in many ways mimicked that of his region.



“Through this exercise our junior Tajik officers learn practical synchronization skills very valuable in a multinational environment,” Col. Ahmadjonzoda said.

The Mongolians used Regional Cooperation to prepare for multinational peacekeeping missions such as those sponsored by the United Nations.

“Our officers and noncommissioned officers are able to enhance communication techniques and planning procedures that enable us to work more efficiently within a coalition environment,” said Col. Baata, the senior Mongolian officer in attendance.

U.S. Army Maj. Robert McCracken, U.S. Central Command’s lead exercise planner, said the purpose of the exercise is to improve the ability of South and Central Asian nations and the U.S. to respond collectively to crises.

“The exercise helps us improve our ability to plan and coordinate as a multinational organization and promote information sharing between military and civilian organizations,” Maj. McCracken said.

The crisis fell under the headings of counterterrorism, border security, counterproliferation, counternarcotic trafficking and stability operations.

For example, Uzbeks were forced to react when they discovered criminals had illegally tapped a vital oil pipeline. Tajik forces treated civilians and doctors suffering symptoms of a mustard gas attack. Terrorists destroyed railroad tracks, mines injured civilians, livestock was stolen, a cholera epidemic threatened.

Portraying the media was a fictional broadcaster called the World News Network whose online news updates exercise participants needed to consider in

their deliberations. When the fictional terrorists issued propaganda, special operations forces responded by disseminating counterpropaganda via radio, newspapers and leaflets.

One of the Uzbek delegates included Lt. Col. Umid Ernazarov, a chemical engineer whose real-life work includes protecting his country against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats.

“I’m supposed to investigate and respond based on information I received and pass that information to my commander and the whole team,” Lt. Col. Ernazarov said as news of the simulated mustard gas attack filtered into the tent hosting the special operations headquarters.

Uzbek Col. Madjitov occupied another tent with the other deputy commanders of Task Force Patriot — an Afghan, a Mongolian and a Tajik.

Using a mixture of Russian, Dari and Tajik — the latter two languages mutually understandable dialects of each other — those senior officers coalesced as a team.

At the end of each day’s training, the national delegations took turns hosting parties featuring food and music traditional to each of the attending countries.

Col. Madjitov was not only eager to conduct further exercises with U.S. and Central Asian partners, he planned to share what he learned at Regional Cooperation with Uzbekistan’s military academies.

“All the challenges in the region provide us incentives to cooperate with each other,” Col. Madjitov said. ♦

From left: A translator explains an exercise scenario to an Afghan Soldier, left, and a Tajik Soldier.

A Mongolian Soldier plots troop locations on a map at Regional Cooperation 2018.

Two participants from Uzbekistan train with a Russian-speaking American Soldier.



INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

**Iraqi Brig. Gen. Arkan al-Tikriti
helped spearhead the victorious
campaign against Daesh**

UNIPATH STAFF

When the dust churning from tank treads mingles with columns of smoke streaming from vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices — clouding the progress of battle — Soldiers are motivated by courageous leaders noted for their sound instincts and conspicuous bravery. Such military leaders inspire troops to fight as heroes and defeat the enemy.

One such commander is Brig. Gen. Arkan Jalal Fadhel al-Tikriti, the 1st Special Forces Brigade's Chief of Staff. When the Joint Operations Command needs someone to resolve intractable battles, the name Arkan al-Tikriti resounds throughout the command centers.

Brig. Gen. Arkan entered military college in 2001 as part of a special forces class. After 2003 he joined the 1st Brigade Quick Response Force. He was selected by the coalition forces to continue his military education outside Iraq after having passed all competitive tests with superior scores.

He holds a bachelor's degree in military science, another in the English language, and a master's degree in military science and counterterrorism. He passed the U.S. ranger course, the basic parachute course, the supply and landing course, the advanced infantry course, and several joint courses dealing with NATO's counterterrorism operations.

Brig. Gen. Arkan's memory teems with heroic stories. He participated in most of the battles against criminal gangs and armed groups in Basra, Maysan and Diyala and after the emergence of Daesh in Jarf al-Sakhr, Ramadi, Fallujah and Mosul. But the battle of Barwana is special because it was the first in which Iraqi forces defeated Daesh gangs after the setback in Mosul.

"In October 2014, I was tasked to leave the defensive positions south of Ramadi and move immediately toward Barwana, about 170 kilometers west of Ramadi. We left the fighting in Ramadi and headed to the other front without a break and exhausted by the ferocity of the fighting and the roughness of the desert road to Barwana," Brig Gen. Arkan said.

"Our task was to prevent Daesh from taking control of Haditha and expelling them from Barwana. Barwana strategically controlled the main road between Haditha and Haditha Dam, which placed the dam under Daesh's control and cut supply routes. The Haditha Dam is one of the most important sources of electrical generation and controls the flow of the Euphrates River."

Brig. Gen. Arkan believes that Iraq's strength resides in its multiethnic character and that there is no place for sectarian strife within the ranks of the Armed Forces.

"The secret to the strength of the Counter-Terrorism Service is that we work as a team, above the sectarian and regional level, and that is why our forces were coherent and fought valiantly, and the enemy could not achieve any superiority against us," he said.



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His theory of overcoming the enemy in an unconventional war entails using professional Soldiers trained to fight in small groups without the need for exhaustive orders.

"Continuous training and selection of outstanding fighters is the cornerstone of building a professional

force that can fight in the most difficult circumstances of unconventional warfare, and all fighters are trained in urban warfare," he said.

"So we draw up our plans at the small group level led by noncommissioned officers, lieutenants or small group commanders within the framework of the main objectives of the supreme command. This is characteristic of the anti-terrorism forces in the rest of the formations in the battles of Mosul and Fallujah."

In Brig. Gen. Arkan's view, gaining the trust of the population is the cornerstone for defeating terrorist gangs and liberating cities.

"Densely populated areas make it difficult to fight because of the need to protect civilians. Sometimes there are civilians in the area just hundreds of meters from the front lines. Our Soldiers know the inhabited houses and try to drive the terrorists away," he said. "We shared our water and food with these families and checked on them every day, which persuaded them to become our eyes on the battlefield."

Despite the crimes Daesh committed against innocent people, and despite the fact that they disrespected the bodies of Iraqi Soldiers, Brig. Gen. Arkan issued orders for Soldiers to treat prisoners well.

"Our main advantage is that we are professional fighters who respect human rights laws and are committed to military law and an institution governed by international charters. Our fighters have been trained to apply and respect these laws," the brigadier general said.

"During the battles we captured two foreign fighters in the Haditha area. We handled them with all humanity and respect and treated one of them for injuries before handing them to the competent authorities."

Half of the Iraqi victory is attributable to information and psychological operations, Brig. Gen. Arkan said.

"Gangs have been able to invade cities and towns easily, relying on spreading rumors, fear and anxiety among the population and the security forces, so we have to have an electronic army to combat terrorism on social networking pages, expose their lies and track their activities." ♦



JORDANIANS IN AFGHANISTAN

AMMAN'S
MILITARY MISSION
TO AFGHANISTAN
REINFORCED THE
BATTLE AGAINST
EXTREMISM

**BRIG. GEN. AZZAM
AL-RAWAHNEH**
JORDAN ARMED FORCES

PHOTOS BY
JORDAN ARMED FORCES

Jordan's persistent strategy has depended on rules, principles and concepts, most of which are aimed at respecting the sanctity of human rights to ensure that people everywhere live decent lives. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is part of this world; it has always participated in and focused its efforts on removing or easing the suffering of people on earth, regardless of their affiliations, religious creeds and ethnicity, especially those who have suffered, and still suffer, from the scourges of war, disasters and terrorism.

These principles, combined with international and regional confidence in Jordan's ability to influence events, led to invitations for the Jordan Armed Forces to participate in international peacekeeping forces around the world. Jordan's Army derives its values and morals from Sharia, maintained by the leaders of the Great Arab Revolt, who focused mainly on allowing humans to live with dignity and pride.



A Jordanian Soldier distributes clothes to Afghan children.

These convictions extend to Afghanistan through distinctive Jordanian participation in an international effort to help our brothers build stability and security, ease suffering and spread the values and concepts of moderate Islam.

AIDING AFGHANISTAN

Afghans have suffered from brutal and destructive wars for several decades as a result of a bitter history of international, regional and local competition to dominate the destiny of that country. The Taliban took over Afghanistan at the end of the last century. Its ideology contradicts the principles of Islam and provided a haven for al-Qaida to plot the September 11 attacks in 2001. This led the United States and its allies to launch an international campaign against terrorism, with Afghanistan as one of its strongholds, that ended with the Taliban's removal from power.



Jordanian military medical staff treat an Afghan civilian for an injury.

Jordan recognized that its commitment to the international community, strategic interests and Islamic culture, values and traditions would help Jordanian troops bring hope and life, highlight the concepts of moderation, and protect and support the Afghan people.

Jordanian participation included military religious imams who contributed to disseminating a moderate version of Sharia, building mosques and certifying Afghan imams. Jordanian women played a role in supporting Afghan women and children, instructing them in their rights and obligations, easing their fears and providing medical support.

These community efforts were accompanied by Soldiers who provided protection and security and helped save the lives of children, women and elderly.

Jordan had multiple reasons for undertaking this important mission in Afghanistan:

- **Political** — It reinforced Jordan's commitment to covenants and international laws relating to the preservation of international peace and security, supported stability and human rights, and was consistent with the country's policy of openness and moderation.
- **Military** — The mission was consistent with developing plans and modernizing the armed forces through the acquisition of expertise and developing skills associated with the participation of advanced armies in a real operational environment.
- **Security** — This relates to the protection of strategic interests of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, through international relations, and its commitment to work with the international community to combat terrorism. Jordan was, and is, a target for terrorist organizations.
- **Religion** — The message of the Jordanian Arab Legion and the Hashemite leadership is to stand with our brothers in religion and to disseminate the Islamic religion, its concepts and its correct values based on moderation and rejection of extremism.
- **Human Rights** — Jordan wished to harness its expertise in the field of providing humanitarian support to Afghans, reduce their suffering and pain through medical assistance programs and provide a safe environment for them to live in freedom and dignity.

Given the professionalism of the Jordan Armed Forces, it is important that it benefit from these experiences and evaluate the outcomes of such participation at all levels and dimensions.

LESSONS LEARNED

At the military level, the Jordan Armed Forces benefited from its Afghanistan mission by working with highly skilled armies and using the latest technology, tools, training and weapons. Joint training was good not just physically for the troops but as a way to maintain morale.

Participation in such environment provides the opportunity to test the effectiveness of training, with all the accompanying physical and psychological preparations, combat readiness and battle procedures.

The basic elements of any army are training, operations and intelligence, and they have been tested and developed through the work environment in Afghanistan.

GIVEN THE JORDAN ARMED FORCES' EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM, THE MISSION TO AFGHANISTAN HELPED RESTORE SECURITY AND STABILITY THROUGH A COMPETENT FORCE CONSISTING NOTABLY OF MILITARY IMAMS AND FEMALE SOLDIERS.



Afghan children wear T-shirts donated by Jordanian Soldiers.



An Afghan child takes lessons from a Jordanian Soldier, one of a small group of female troops assigned to the peace-building mission in Afghanistan.

The mission also brought improvements in cultural awareness and military culture in all its components. The ability to adapt to different working environments in the area of responsibility has brought cognitive and cultural benefits for our officers and enlisted men.

When it comes to elite formations, they learned the requirements of modern warfare. The practical experience in the field has provided an opportunity to qualify units for a high level of combat readiness.

Civil-military affairs are a key to the success of military information operations, stability and reconstruction. Many teams have enriched their experience in this field.

Self-confidence and self-criticism reflect positively on the morale side. Our forces have proved their ability to compete with major armies in the field of stabilization operations.

At the political level, the mission enhanced the presence of Jordan on the international political

map and established it as a key player in providing a tolerant, team-work-based approach to preserving the peace.

When it comes to international security, participation in multinational operations helped Jordan increase awareness of the latest intelligence systems, methods and instruments. This is important to a country such as ours that is targeted by terrorist organizations. Our performance in the intelligence arena was tested during real operations in the field.

The gains were also significant at the religious level. The participation of military imams allowed Jordan to train and qualify a large group of Afghan imams. These imams were imbued with the Amman Message, which stresses an Islam without the taint of intolerance and violence. With this knowledge, Afghan imams were better prepared to confront and isolate extremists.

Imams are more acceptable to the local population, and more capable of bridging the gap



Jordanian troops distribute gifts to Afghan villagers.

between civilians and military forces. They provide a positive image of Islam, including when they helped rebuild and renovate mosques in Afghanistan.

Economically, the missions helped the Jordan Armed Forces pay for training, weapons and certifications. This process requires a lot of money, which makes it imperative to cooperate and participate with advanced countries to maintain the above.

Participating in the Afghan mission provides a good income for personnel, which helped in building morale and financial stability. And it does so without increasing the burden on the state budget.

In the social realm, the Jordanian policy of openness, solidarity and interaction with the international community helps remove the sense of isolation imposed by the Taliban on the Afghan people.

The Jordanian efforts — especially with the participation of Jordanian women — could help alter the prevalent ideologies in Afghan society. It provided an opportunity to highlight the noble concepts of Jordanian society.

SUMMARY

Jordan seeks to consolidate its strategy of supporting security operations, peacekeeping and international efforts to alleviate the suffering of peoples from the scourge of war, based on the criteria of humanitarian, religious and ethical commitment.

Given the Jordan Armed Forces' experience and professionalism, the mission to Afghanistan helped restore security and stability through a competent force consisting notably of military imams and female Soldiers.

Jordan's motivations were to stand by its brothers in religion and belief in Afghanistan. Jordanian forces provided various types of medical, religious, morale and psychological assistance.

There is no doubt that such participation provided plenty of lessons at various levels, the most important of which are military and religious. This will go a long way to developing our forces to be a model for the region. ♦



SECURING

SINAI

Egypt combines military operations with economic development to stabilize the peninsula

EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES | PHOTOS BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Egypt's Armed Forces have made strenuous efforts to bring security and stability to the Sinai. Focused on what the military calls the northeastern strategic area, troops have successfully implemented Operation Sinai 2018.

The leadership of the Daesh-affiliated terrorist organization calling itself Wilayat Sinai was targeted in northern and central Sinai. All the terrorist outposts discovered were destroyed, and a large number of terrorist, criminal and wanted elements were apprehended, as well as people suspected of supporting takfiri elements.

Infrastructure belonging to terrorists, such as hide-outs, trenches, tunnels, weapons caches, ammunition, explosive devices, administrative supplies, media centers and transmission centers were also destroyed. The detection, seizure and destruction of a large number of vehicles and motorcycles, along with large quantities of explosives, weapons, ammunition, bombs and explosive devices continued throughout 2018.

The goal is to re-establish normal life within the areas of operation, with the civilian police taking full control of the areas after they had been investigated and cleared by the Armed Forces to ensure they were free of terrorist elements.

A sense of normalcy returned as residents voted securely in presidential elections, public secondary school examinations were held in North Sinai, and students returned to Al-Arish University and commenced studies as usual at the beginning of the new school year.

Lake Bardawil reopened for fishermen, as did the ring road and the majority of internal routes. This ensured that trucks carrying fresh food and dairy products could reach the population safely and that people can travel safely in and out of Sinai.

Securing roads also meant that the military could

cut off terrorist supply routes and thwart attempts to smuggle arms or transfer terrorist elements into the Egyptian provinces.

In West and South Sinai, a large number of vehicles carrying weapons, ammunition and drugs were detected, seized and destroyed. Likewise, many people were apprehended attempting to infiltrate the country or migrate illegally. Also pursued were elements involved in growing drug crops to finance terrorism and extremism, as well as those involved in gold mining and smuggling.

The Armed Forces succeeded in taking over areas of terrorist activity, besieging the terrorist elements and destroying their infrastructure.

In sum, in the process of fighting across all strategic areas since the beginning of Operation Sinai 2018, the Armed Forces have been able to eliminate more than 450 terrorists and detect and destroy more than 1,200 explosive devices, along with more than 900 vehicles, 1,000 motorcycles, 420 drug farms, 120 tons of drugs and 25 million drug tablets.

In addition, more than 16 tunnel openings have been discovered and destroyed along the border strip in North Sinai.

MILITARY-CIVILIAN SUCCESSES

The Armed Forces are working in cooperation with all state and private sector organizations to complete development works within the territory of Sinai, with the establishment of a large number of projects in all areas to serve its population.

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The Armed Forces' Engineering Authority has been charged with implementing 310 projects in Sinai at a cost of 195 billion Egyptian pounds. As of late 2018, about 145 projects had been completed, and 165 were in progress.

For starters, national projects aim to improve the economy of the region. They include the Suez Canal tunnel project, fish farms, an artificial lake, expansion of an industrial zone at Port Said, and implementation of the Bardawil Airport project.

Nine roads with a total length of 460 kilometers have been completed. Fifteen more roads extending another 1,462 kilometers are under construction.

Armed Forces engineers have been charged with building about 81,000 residential units and 400 Bedouin homes. About 1,200 residential housing units have been completed in Masa'eed, 6,972 residential units in South Sinai and another 12,266 homes in New Ismailia City.

The military is also helping to create "development clusters" in which residents live next to where they work. Twenty-six development clusters have emerged in North and South Sinai provinces. Another 18 housing and

Children greet Egyptian Soldiers in the city of al-Arish, returning to normal after a military offensive targeted terrorists.

agricultural clusters and eight clusters for fishing villages have arisen in the Bardawil Lake area.

Health care is also critical. Fifteen hospitals, a health clinic and a pharmacy have been commissioned. Nine hospitals have been constructed and developed along with a clinic and pharmacy while six other hospitals are being constructed and upgraded, including Rafah Central Hospital, Baghdad, Rumanah and Gifgafa.

The military has also been assigned the task of developing 53 schools, universities, institutes and educational departments, 45 of which had been completed as of late 2018.

Industrial development includes expansion of the Al-Arish cement factory and development of a marble processing plant in Gifgafa. Agricultural and land reclamation projects total nine, including cultivation of 13,680 *feddans* (each equal to 0.42 hectares) in Bir Al Abd, and irrigation pumps at Sarbium and Al Mahsamah.

Water projects number 54. Twenty-three of them are



Egyptian police provide security in the city of al-Arish.



A well-stocked bakery signals that life is improving in al-Arish.

finished. They include seawater desalination plants in Al Tor, Taba, Ra's Mal'ab and Sheikh Zuweid. Sewer lines in the city of Al Tor have been completed, and similar projects are underway in the North Sinai cities of Bir Al Abd, Sheikh Zuweid, Nakhl and Al Hasnah.

Electrification is also a priority. The power network was upgraded in the cities of Al Tor, Abu Radis, Nuweiba, Dahab, Taba, and Rafah (in the international border area). The electrical line network supplying the sanitary disposal stations in Rafah, Sheikh Zuweid and al-Arish was upgraded.

Cultural, athletic, leisure and social projects have not

been ignored. With 38 projects planned for implementation, seven have been completed, including the headquarters of the National Authority for the Development of the Sinai Peninsula in al-Arish, the Al Feyrouz Club in New Ismailia, the International Youth Village in Sharm El Sheikh, the indoor sports hall in al-Arish, the Al Sahabah Mosque in Sharm El Sheikh, and the Swiss Inn Hotel in al-Arish. The remainder of the projects are in progress.

Finally, a handful of other projects critical to Sinai's economic well-being will begin soon. They include the development and upgrade of the airports in al-Arish, Sharm El Sheikh and Al Maliz, construction of eight fishing villages in Bir Al Abd and a fishing marina in Rumanah, and establishment of an enterprise zone for the marble and glass industry in central Sinai.

As this activity illustrates, Egypt's Armed Forces play an outsized role in not only providing physical security in the Sinai, but also ensuring a vastly improved quality of life for its residents. ♦

Heroics *in* flight

*Four Pakistani
helicopter pilots
rescue British
mountaineers at
death-defying heights*

MAJ. MUZAFFAR AHMED, PAKISTAN ARMED FORCES

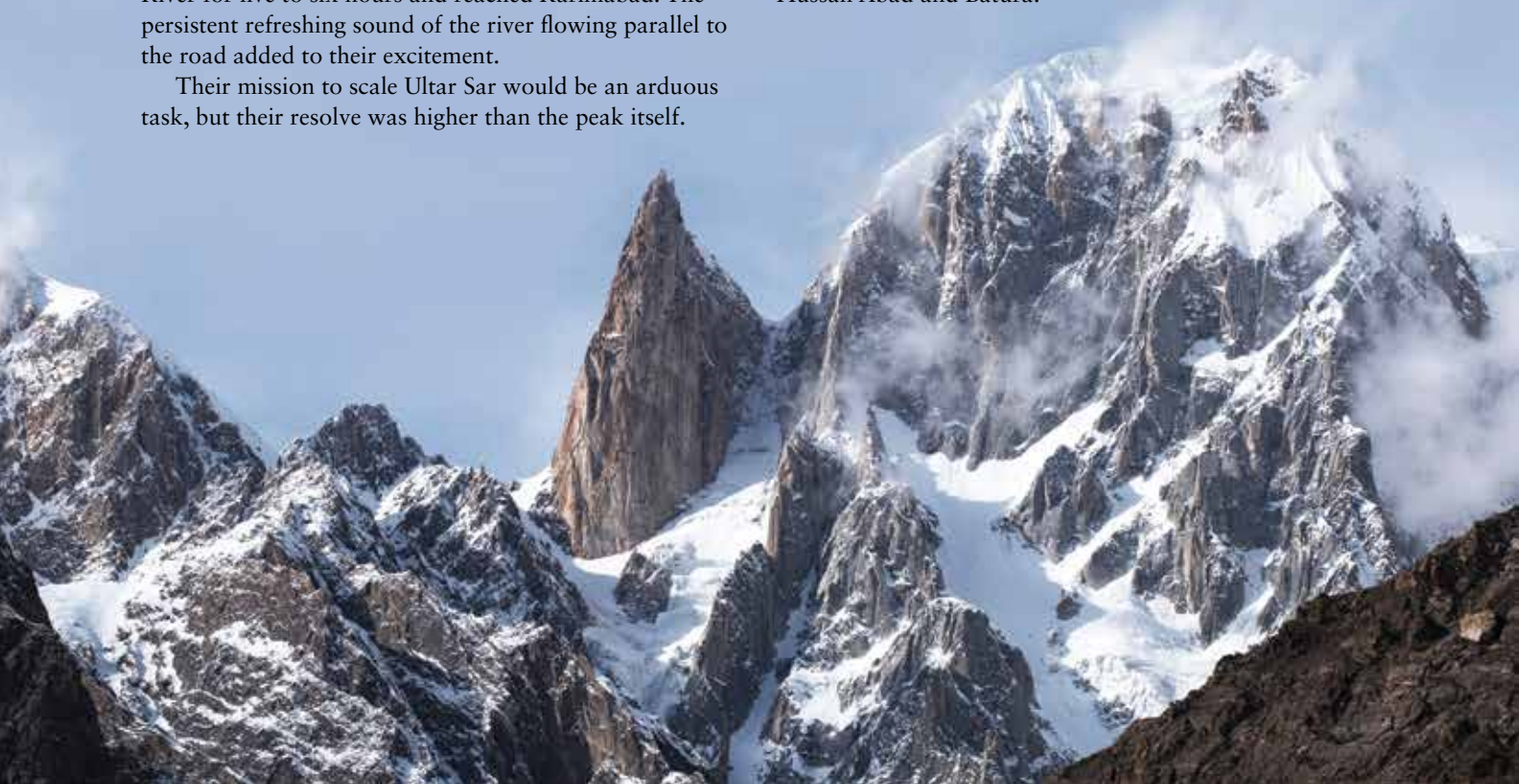
It was a calm, sunny day on May 29, 2018, when three seasoned climbers — Bruce Normand, Timothy Miller and Christian Huber — kicked off an expedition to Ultar Sar peak in Pakistan. Normand and Miller hailed from Britain, and Huber joined them from Austria. All three climbers had a special affection for Pakistan's Northern Areas, evident from their expeditions to other mountain peaks during previous climbing seasons.

After flying to Gilgit and passing through the Fairy Meadows, they checked into a riverside resort at Hunza. The time and weather for trekking were ideal. Eager to get close to their destination, they traveled alongside Hunza River for five to six hours and reached Karimabad. The persistent refreshing sound of the river flowing parallel to the road added to their excitement.

Their mission to scale Ultar Sar would be an arduous task, but their resolve was higher than the peak itself.

Ultar Sar (also called Ultar, Ultar II, Bojohagur Duanasir II) is the southeasternmost major peak of the Batura Muztagh, a subrange of the Karakoram mountains. It lies about 10 kilometers northeast of Karimabad, a town on the Karakoram Highway in the Hunza Valley.

At 24,238 feet, Ultar Sar is not one of the highest peaks of the Karakoram, but it is notable for its dramatic rise above the local terrain. Its southern flank is 17,388 feet above the Hunza River near Karimabad. It is a visually striking peak in the Batura group of mountains of Karakoram. The prominent surrounding peaks covering Ultar are Ladyfinger, Marble, Harchinder, Passu and Diran peaks. Famous glaciers in the area include Attabad, Ultar, Hussan Abad and Batura.



For mountaineers, it's a technically difficult peak: steady ice, overhanging rocks, crevasses and sharp ridges. In the past, its ascent was attempted by many expeditions, but most failed. The only expedition to scale this peak successfully was from Japan in 1997.

Normand, a 51-year-old physicist, was the leader of the trio. He had been to Pakistan 13 times on expeditions. But Miller, a 21-year-old geology student, was making his first attempt to climb a mountain in Pakistan. From Karimabad, they reached Shahabad and stayed there for two weeks to acclimate themselves. The team reached the Ahmedabad base camp on June 18, 2018, fully geared with requisite climbing equipment. Two days later, using Alpine-style climbing techniques, they started to scale Ultar Sar peak in perfect weather.

The style of mountaineering they favored was one of self-sufficiency, carrying all their food, shelter and equipment during the ascent. While trekking in stages toward Camp-1 and Camp-2, they started encountering difficulties from overhanging ridges and fears of treacherous weather.

On June 27, the weather turned much worse than forecast. At an elevation of just over 19,700 feet, a blizzard forced them to abandon their plans. As they waited for a chance to descend, they dug a platform in the snow for their three-man tent at Camp-2. During the night of June 29/30, at about 1 a.m., an avalanche buried them under 6 feet of ice.

The fight for survival began. Miller ripped his way out of their buried tent with his teeth and battled to the surface before digging to save the lives of his trapped comrades. Miller pulled a half-conscious Normand from a semi-airhole. Together, they desperately sought Huber's whereabouts.

It took them more than an hour to find their Austrian colleague, but Huber had suffocated under the weight of the avalanche before they could save him. He was just 40 years old. Normand said later: "We are very disturbed and grieved that we could not save our comrade. Moreover, we feel sorry for the family members and especially Christian's only son that their beloved is no more."

Once clear of the buried tent, the pair found themselves stranded in a snowstorm wearing only their thin base layers of clothing. They had to dig out their kit to avoid frostbite. Miller and Normand reported their condition on a satellite phone linked to their tour operator, requesting a helicopter rescue. Unfortunately, on June 30, the weather would not permit a rescue attempt. The two surviving

mountaineers spent two days in their broken tent, waiting for the weather to ease before they had a chance to be airlifted to safety.

Though the weather was still unfavorable, pilots of the Pakistan Air Force No. 5 Squadron took off from Skardu for Ultar peak on July 1 at 5 a.m. An hour later, the formation comprising two Ecureuil helicopters flown by Maj. Fakhar-e-Abbas, with co-pilot Maj. Irtaza Ali Hamdani, and Maj. Abid Rafique, with co-pilot Maj. Zia-ur-Rehman, reached Hunza.

After refueling, they took off again and at about 6:30 a.m. reached the area of the avalanche nearly 4 miles above sea level. It took them almost 20 minutes of hovering to spot the exact site. Then the real challenge began. Formation leader Maj. Fakhar-e-Abbas narrated:

"We started analyzing the site for possible landing. It was an extreme altitude. To our dismay, there was utter absence of basic landing aids like a windsock, marking of the helipad, leveled ground or any facilitating feature.

We made several attempts to check the landing configuration and availability of some safe margins. Despite significantly reduced margins and prevailing temperature of minus 2 Celsius, we finally planned to land. Maj. Abid Rafique touched down on an ice rock very professionally and picked up Tim Miller and the deceased Christian [Huber]. Then I made an attempt and picked up Mr. Bruce Normand with the equipment and flew back. This was the first-ever, unprecedented historical landing at

the height of 19,700 feet. Sitting closely on a razor sharp ridge, a little mistake or judgment error could have been fatal for all."

At 7:30 a.m. the helicopters landed safely back at Hunza.

This daring mission of Maj. Fakhar-e-Abbas and his team in unusual and challenging circumstances was acknowledged and praised not only by the mountaineers but also by the British High Commission in Pakistan and the international media. The remarkable action by Pakistan Army Aviation pilots has not only raised the morale of mountaineers who want to visit Pakistan to scale different peaks but also improved the image of Pakistan internationally.

We are really proud of our aviators who are not only proving their mettle in Pakistan's war against terror, but also playing a significant role in disaster relief works and in flying rescue missions in challenging conditions. ♦

Editor's note: A version of this article appeared in *Hilal* magazine



Four heroic Pakistani helicopter pilots stand with the two British mountaineers they rescued. PAKISTAN ARMED FORCES

QATAR ADDRESSES

FOREIGN FIGHTERS

TOP QATARI OFFICIAL SPEAKS IN DOHA AT THE
FORUM ON RETURNING FOREIGN FIGHTERS

INFORMATION OFFICE, QATARI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani affirmed that Qatar is an active partner in the international collaboration against terrorism.

At the Forum on Returning Foreign Fighters in November 2018 in Doha, Sheikh Mohammed said the issue of terrorism is a high priority for Qatar. He pointed to the continuous development of national legislation and its related institutional entities to fight terrorism, and the implementation of United Nations resolutions in this regard as well as its active involvement in the international coalition against terrorism.

In a speech during the opening of the forum, Sheikh Mohammed said terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, describing any terror act as a crime, regardless of the motives or identity of the perpetrators, including acts motivated by intolerance, extremism or otherwise.

He added that terrorism cannot be confronted and eliminated unless the international community unites its efforts in a patient, inclusive approach based on cooperation and participation among all states, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations and academic and research entities.

This includes an effective exchange of information in the field of security and prevention of terrorist threats as well as incapacitating and isolating terrorists within the framework of the international strategy to combat terrorism. Also, the international community should abide by international law and abandon the policy of double standards in the fight against terrorism.

Sheikh Mohammed pointed to U.N. reports that indicate foreign fighters are motivated by common factors, whether they are from the Middle East, Asia or Europe. Most are young people who lack the ideology of right thinking. He said they belong to oppressed or economically isolated communities, lack opportunities to improve their livelihoods and education, and suffer from a lack of jobs.

He stressed that terrorism cannot and should not be linked to any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

In his speech, Sheikh Mohammed noted the

increased use by terrorists and their supporters of communications technology to spread extremist ideology that helps recruit terrorists and incite acts of violence. States must intensify cooperation to prevent terrorists from exploiting technology, communications and resources in inciting support for terrorist acts.

Sheikh Mohammed added that it was imperative for security and military forces to take urgent measures to enforce law to counter imminent threats posed by terrorist groups that recruit and transport fighters across international borders. But he pointed out that these urgent operations should not stand in the way of addressing the real causes and motives of terrorism.



The foreign wife of a Daesh terrorist is held in a camp after the liberation of Mosul. Qatar organized the Forum on Returning Foreign Fighters in late 2018 to address the issue. REUTERS

The international community realizes that foreign fighters pose a serious threat to their countries of origin, the countries they cross and the countries to which they travel, as well as to the countries neighboring the armed conflict zones. According to the U.N., foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq come from more than 100 countries.

The threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters requires comprehensively tackling root causes of terrorism, particularly repressive and sectarian policies, marginalization and the absence of social justice suffered by large groups in some societies, he said.

Societies also must address terrorist incitement by blocking dissemination of radical ideology and focusing on correcting it, promoting political and religious



Displaced Syrian children seek safety in a camp to escape Daesh attacks in December 2018. Qatar supports humanitarian assistance to lessen the scourge of terrorism.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

“WE ARE COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING IT AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS BY PARTICIPATING IN ALL INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD.” — Sheikh Mohammed

tolerance and economic development, paying more attention to youths, promoting social cohesion and inclusiveness, ending armed conflicts, depriving terrorist groups of the ability to establish themselves and create safe havens, and facilitating reintegration and rehabilitation.

He stressed that the success of any national strategy to integrate returning terrorist elements from the battlefields requires the eradication of environments that incubate extremist ideology and building state capacity to prevent and combat terrorism with full respect for the rule of law and human rights.

National legislation must be brought into line with the state's obligations at the international level, he added, especially the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution No. 2178 of 2014 and resolution No. 2396 of 2017 on criminalizing acts committed by returning combatants and establishing the legal basis for their prosecution and rehabilitating and integrating them into society.

The issue of terrorism is a high priority for Qatar. It is an active partner in international collaboration against terrorism.

“We are committed to addressing it at the national,

regional and international levels by participating in all international and regional efforts in this regard,” Sheikh Mohammed said.

He underlined that Qatar has provided humanitarian assistance and supported educational and economic development initiatives and building more flexible

societies to combat terrorism and extremism.

Qatar supports the Education Above All initiative, which so far has helped educate 10 million children around the world, noting that this initiative is based on supporting children affected by conflicts and disasters.

To encourage economic empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa region, he said, Qatar supports Silatech, which has provided 1 million jobs for young people in 16 countries since 2008 and seeks to provide 2 million jobs by 2020.

Sheikh Mohammed recognized the legal, political and social challenges facing foreign fighters, especially in light of international differences in legally defining terrorism,

frequent politicization of the term terrorism and weak cooperation between states for political reasons.

At the beginning of his speech, Sheikh Mohammed welcomed participants to the two-day forum, noting that the broad participation reflected international will to address the phenomenon of returning foreign fighters. ♦



Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani attends a meeting of the anti-Daesh coalition in 2018.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



CURING *the* CUBS *of the* CALIPHATE

Nations need treatment plans to rehabilitate children brainwashed by Daesh terrorists

DR. HUSSEIN ALLAWI, CEO, THE AKKAD CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AFFAIRS AND FUTURE STUDIES

Humanity today continues to face dangers, though these dangers differ from one region to the other. Most people concede that terrorism is among the worst of these dangers. Starting in the 1970s, terrorism and terrorist groups became increasingly active so that today we're experiencing the third generation of terrorism. However, the latest terrorist generation (Daesh, al-Nusrah Front, al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and al-Qaida) has started to use a new weapon, namely children and teenagers, described as cubs of the caliphate — a concept developed by Daesh that distinguishes the new terrorist generation from previous ones.

THE ADULTS RESPONSIBLE

On September 5, 2016, Abu Harith Al Iraqi was killed by an Iraqi airstrike while riding his bicycle in Mosul. The Iraqi Air Force received intelligence that “Abu Harith” was the officer assigned to train so-called cubs of the caliphate as part of Daesh.

Daesh kidnapped children between the ages of 8 and 14 and brainwashed them to kill and spread the poison of Daesh's extremist ideology before setting them loose in the streets of Mosul after many terrorists had already escaped the city.

A second Daesh terrorist called Abu Hamza Al Belgiki (The Belgian) also played a role in training the cubs. In 2018, the Central Criminal Court in Baghdad, Al Rusafa, condemned Al Belgiki to death by hanging.

The spokesman for the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq, Abdsattar Birqdarn, stated: “The second panel of the Central Criminal Court in Al Rusafa heard the case of the accused Tarek Jadoun, nicknamed Abu Hamza Al Belgiki, who is a member of Daesh. This terrorist participated in many operations and is responsible for training those referred to as the cubs of the caliphate. Al Belgiki, who is of Moroccan origin, is one of the most prominent wanted foreign terrorists who fought in Syria and Iraq as a member of Daesh.”

Al Belgiki was prosecuted under the provisions of Article 4/1 of the Anti-Terrorism Law of Iraq of 2005.

BRAINWASHING THE CUBS

The terrorist organization targets kids as young as 6 years old and instills extremist teachings in them that encapsulates Daesh's approach to child rearing, education, and fomenting hatred.

Hisham Al Hashimi, an Iraqi expert on terrorist groups, points out that the introductions of most books that are part of Daesh's Sharia curriculum say the following: “By the grace of God, the Islamic State enters a new era by planting the first seed of Islamic education based on the method of the Book, prophetic guidance and an understanding of the pious predecessors, with a clear vision that is neither Eastern nor Western but is instead based on the Quran and the Prophet, far from the desires, vanities and delusions of Eastern socialism or Western capitalism,

political party brokers or the deviant curricula found across the Earth.”

Documents and Twitter postings revealed the educational philosophy of Daesh. Grades in school were divided into three stages — primary, middle and preparatory — spread over nine years. Each school year consisted of two academic terms lasting a total of 10 *hijri* (the Muslim lunar calendar) months.

The primary grades encompassed five years, followed by two years in the middle grades and two years for the preparatory stage. Academic subjects were grouped into three categories: sciences, religion and vocational training. At the conclusion, the student graduated to higher education.

In its psychological and propaganda campaign against its opponents, Daesh broadcast a promotional video, *Cubs of the Caliphate*, about the lives of the cubs. It showed training camps created to receive the sons of terrorists — referred to as jihadists — who were killed in the battles during the triumphant advance of the Iraqi forces during Operation Inherent Resolve between 2014 and 2017.

According to journalist Raya Aljalabi, the production was widely propagated on social media by supporters of the terrorist organization on social media between 2014 and 2016. The “promo” was broadcast for hours, undoubtedly shocking viewers, particularly professionals who analyze the phenomenon of terrorism and the content of terrorist propaganda.

A boy is enlisted as a soldier during fighting in Libya. Iraq and Syria face the possibility that children militarized by Daesh could become problems for society in peacetime. REUTERS



Hadathani Abi (My Father Told Me) was considered the most dangerous video broadcast by Daesh, mainly because of its technical sophistication and the implicit messages the video wanted to convey.

It suggested that Daesh would get revenge by training and brainwashing cubs of the caliphate to act as ticking time bombs — suicide bombers ready to blow themselves up when ordered to do so by their leaders.

Mia Bloom, a Canadian-born professor of security studies, divided Daesh children into five categories:

1. Children of foreign or migrant fighters
2. Children of local fighters
3. Children left in orphanages under control of Daesh
4. Children forcibly taken from their parents
5. Children who voluntarily joined Daesh

ANTI-EXTREMISM TREATMENT

The model offered by the Akkad Center for Strategic Affairs and Future Studies in Iraq offers an approach to treating the phenomenon of violent extremism, particularly the extremism of the cubs of the caliphate, to address the phenomenon of child and teenage fighters within Daesh. It is an approach based on observing the behavior of the children who were subject to cultural indoctrination by Daesh in an attempt to make them terrorist fighters to be used in terrorist attacks against local communities. The model is as follows:

1. Isolation: Diagnosis of the cubs' environment and living conditions
2. Treatment using counterindoctrination programs to remove the negative energy and takfiri ideologies through a series of stages
3. Ideological replacement with soft ideas and consumer culture to direct the tendency toward positive growth and instill a culture more grounded in reality than the violent utopianism preached by Daesh
4. Field tests to measure the growth of positive behavior among the former cubs of the caliphate
5. Reintegration
6. Further evaluation

To address the violent extremism inherent in the cubs of the caliphate phenomenon, Iraq needs dynamic national policies. This is what was proposed by Dr. Ahmed Qasim Muftan of the Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies in Baghdad:

First, the country needs to restructure and redesign the academic curriculum to focus on building practical content rather than theoretical content in academic lessons.

Second, Iraq must encourage a democratic and community-oriented civic culture to weaken all forms of the culture of violence and extremism: religious, ethnic, factional and regional. The schools and media have a fundamental role to play in this ideological reformation.

It requires a national effort initiated by the state through all its official and civic bodies — executive authority should achieve this vision institutionally — and must be

an integrated and concrete project that must be maintained permanently.

Third, we must instill the values of tolerance, diversity, human rights and acceptance of others through the relevant institutions using guidance and education. This requires that the ministries of Education and Higher Education take the leading role instead of the religious endowments, along with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and media agencies.

The phenomenon of the cubs of the caliphate is one of the major challenges of the legacy of Daesh and one that preoccupies intelligence and security agencies.

The development and inclusion of curriculum tackling terrorism is the way to diminish the impact and activities of terrorist organizations and will limit the ability of the persons in question to create insurgent and terrorist groups that threaten the stability achieved in liberated areas, particularly in Iraq, which announced the liberation of all its territories in 2017.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of the cubs of the caliphate is one of the major challenges of the legacy of Daesh and one that preoccupies intelligence and security agencies. Progress will require national programs along with international, governmental, public and social partnerships to establish a comprehensive treatment plan instead of one focused solely on the issues of security and criminality.

Social, educational, economic and media dimensions are rarely priorities in Middle Eastern countries that have suffered from terrorism. But treating the effects of terrorism is a necessity rather than a choice in the process of preventing violent extremism. Failure to address such extremism allows it to become a fire that spreads over time.

To treat the phenomenon of the cubs of the caliphate, we must create models that differ in substance but are the same in essence. It's all part of the strategic art for combating violent extremism and terrorism. ♦

EXPOSING THE EXTREMISTS

**TRADITIONAL WEAPONS CAN ONLY DO
SO MUCH TO DEFEAT THE SCOURGE OF TERRORISM**



UNIPATH STAFF

When researchers with the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism interviewed 100 former Daesh members in places such as Iraq and Syria, their findings came as a surprise to many.

Most of these men and women — fighters and volunteers from as far away as Europe — felt betrayed by Daesh. And it wasn't just a case of weariness in fighting for a losing cause.

Daesh seduced them with promises of solidarity — the creation of a dignified, ideal Islamic society in which their emotional and physical needs would be met.

None of these things materialized. What they discovered instead was a brutal terrorist regime in which Islam's principles were mocked and betrayed in an orgy of violence.

Such insights will be critical in preventing the resurgence of violent extremism and rehabilitating would-be terrorists, several speakers reiterated at the Amman Forum on Countering Violent Extremism in October 2018.

"ISIS was peddling a utopian dream," Dr. Anne Speckhard, director of the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism, told conference attendees,

who numbered more than 300.

Hosted for the first time by the Jordan Armed Forces Military Center for Counterterrorism and Counterextremism, the forum allowed international participants to share ideas about combating radical ideologies before they mushroom into terrorist movements.

"This conference took place at a pivotal moment in the fight against violent extremism. With large-scale military operations across the region gradually winding down, much of the focus will shift to handling the inevitable flow of fighters returning to their home countries. This evolving threat served as the impetus for the Amman Forum," said Zack Bazzi, Middle East regional advisor for the Spirit of America organization, which co-sponsored the conference.

The Jordan Armed Forces is playing a larger role in this ideological warfare. Dr. Mohammed Al-Athmat, former director of the Jordanian counterterrorism center, noted that the Sixth Article of the 2014 National Plan to confront extremism called upon the Royal Jordanian National Defense College to conduct further studies on the phenomena of ideological extremism and its impact on the country's security.



THE MILITARY COUNTEREXTREMISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER

in Jordan was established in response to the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein to respond long term to the ideological and cultural challenges of terrorism. It was inaugurated by Jordan's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mahmoud Freihat in October 2017. The mission of the center is to combat ideological extremism in line with the government and popular efforts of the Jordanian state that are compatible with international efforts. The center falls under the jurisdiction of the Royal Jordanian National Defense College but affiliates academically with Mu'tah University. The center operates with the awareness that military solutions alone are not enough to end terrorism and boost national, regional and international security. As part of its efforts to counter ideological extremism, the center's curriculum highlights the values and principles of Islam free of distortions by extremists. It offers a master's degree for those majoring in counterextremism and counterterrorism strategies through a specialized program never seen before in the Arab and Islamic worlds.

Prosecuting and imprisoning terrorists is necessary to contain threats, but academics and security professionals realize that jamming like-minded extremists together behind prison walls creates problems of its own.

It's behind bars that violent ideologues form alliances with ordinary criminals to create terrorist movements professing a right to kill innocent people who don't agree with them, Dr. Al-Athmat told conference attendees.

"If prisons are the worst places for living, they are surely the best places to exchange ideas and shape dark minds," Dr. Al-Athmat said.

One alternative discussed by Dr. Al-Athmat is rehabilitation of convicted extremists to reintegrate them into society. He commended a Saudi Arabian program that began in 2003 for targeting the ideological and the psychological needs of would-be terrorists. Indonesia uses a similar program that relies on enlisting former extremists to dissuade new extremists.

Dr. Speckhard's organization has specialized in counternarrative campaigns using video testimony of disillusioned Daesh members to dissuade radicalized youth from turning to terrorism. The videos aim to make an emotional, and not just intellectual, connection with viewers.

"These people that have been in ISIS and walked away — that are defectors, returnees and prisoners — if you can get their stories they're instructive. They can be cautionary tales," Dr. Speckhard said.

Ideology is an equally important component of counterterrorism, said Samih Al-Maaaitah, Jordan's former minister of state for media affairs and communications. Such a campaign must include refuting religious misinterpretations used by terrorists to rationalize their crimes.

"There is a military war against these extremist organizations, but societies need a long-term war of ideas, a war that promotes values, ethics and a proper understanding of religion and Sharia texts," Al-Maaaitah said.

Participants at the Amman forum included academics, military officers, diplomats, and business and religious leaders from 20 countries. Attendance was twice as large as originally projected, which pleased the Jordanians and Americans who helped organize the event.

"There is a need for policies and strategies to strengthen the principles of moderation and tolerance to protect future generations," said Brig. Gen. Abdullah Shudeifat, commander of the Royal Jordanian National Defense College. ♦

NATO



AIDS

AFGHANISTAN

THE TRAINING AND ADVISING ROLE
BENEFITS AFGHAN SECURITY BY HELPING
TO MARGINALIZE VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

SINCE THE FALL OF THE TALIBAN REGIME IN 2001, Afghanistan has been able to engage positively across different areas with the United States, NATO and the broader international community.

While the initial mission of the military coalition that toppled the Taliban was to restore peace and stability, various factions within the international community have striven to rebuild the Afghan state with their own visions and motives in mind. This has led to the reconstruction of the war-torn country in numerous areas of social, political and economic aspects.

NATO's post-Taliban engagement in Afghanistan was a joint effort to develop an enduring partnership with the Afghan government and its security forces. To this end, the alliance established the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in December 2001 in close coordination with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386.



An Afghan Soldier fires a howitzer during an exercise with NATO military advisors. REUTERS

The primary mission of ISAF was to strengthen local forces and stabilize the country after the fall of the Taliban. Consequently, the ISAF mission was able to build the largest coalition in NATO's history with over 140,000 Soldiers from 51 NATO and non-NATO partner nations serving

in Afghanistan. This was implemented in collaboration with the Afghan interim government to provide security assistance and training to the newly established Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

For many years, ISAF played the leading combat role to help protect the Afghan government. It was initially active in the capital, but gradually expanded its mission toward the eastern and southern parts of the country.

In 2003, at the request of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, NATO took primary command of ISAF to provide security outside of the capital, Kabul. As the Taliban insurgency spread and intensified in rural areas during 2007 and 2008, new counterinsurgency tactics were introduced to combat those wishing to destabilize Afghan society. As a result, the Taliban lost momentum and were ejected from most population centers.

After the transition in 2014, ISAF shifted its security role from combat to a training and advising mission aimed at preparing ANSF to take the lead in providing security for the country.

Accordingly, the ANSF, better trained than ever, were able to take responsibility for security across the country. Since then, Afghan national defense and security forces have shown competence and bravery in defending their homeland.

Moreover, the ANSF have also demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of Taliban attacks and have proved they are able to defeat the insurgents. For this reason, the Taliban and other insurgent groups have not been able to hold any major urban or population centers since the withdrawal of U.S./NATO troops.

When the ISAF mission was completed after the transition of security responsibility to the ANSF in 2014, NATO remained determined to maintain a long-term relationship with the Afghan government through an advisory role. To that end, on January 2015, NATO launched another crucial mission for the security of the Afghan people under the name of Resolute Support (RS).

RS aimed to train, advise and assist Afghan security forces in the fight against multiple insurgent groups operating in Afghanistan and broader region. The decision was made during the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw

THE TALIBAN AND OTHER INSURGENT
GROUPS SHOULD REALIZE THAT
AFGHAN FORCES ARE NOW CAPABLE
OF SECURING THE COUNTRY AND WILL
NEVER ALLOW TERRORIST GROUPS TO
HIDE, PLAN AND OPERATE FROM AFGHAN
SOIL AGAINST ITS PEOPLE AND
THOSE OF OTHER STATES.





NATO helicopters land at a base in Nangarhar province. REUTERS

and subsequent summits in Brussels, where NATO leaders agreed to extend the RS mission and reaffirmed their commitment to support Afghanistan in its quest for peace and stability through 2024.

Since then, the enduring partnership between NATO and the ANSF has paved the way for improved security and governance, despite serious challenges. This is crucial because by supporting the Afghan government and continuing security assistance to the ANSF, NATO and other partner nations help prevent the Taliban from taking over the country to re-establish it as a sanctuary for terrorist organizations.

Therefore, one of the main objectives of the RS mission has been to provide advice and assistance for Afghan security institutions and to empower them in their fight against the Taliban, Haqqani Network and ISIS-Khorasan province (ISIS-K). As a result, the capabilities of Afghan security forces have significantly improved against these insurgents.

A NATO Soldier from Italy trains an Afghan National Army recruit near Herat.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

For instance, Afghan Special Forces are excelling in the fight against the Taliban and other extremist groups. The Afghan Special Operation Corps — a U.S./NATO trained military unit — has racked up numerous achievements. These well-trained and well-equipped forces have inflicted heavy casualties on ISIS-K and other transnational extremist groups in recent years.

Today, these forces are in charge of their own combat and counterterrorism operations in different parts of the country. Likewise, Afghan commandos are now increasingly capable of conducting night operations after receiving the necessary training from their U.S./NATO counterparts.

The night air assault operations conducted by Afghan Special Forces have been extremely effective in killing and capturing terrorist elements. By conducting these operations, the Afghan commando units have been able to break the momentum of the insurgency, dealing major blows to their command and control across Afghanistan.

As the ANSF become more capable in defeating the insurgency and maintaining security, the Taliban have little choice but to come to the negotiating table. Furthermore, the strength of Afghan forces in recent years has demonstrated that their enemies cannot win militarily. The only way forward for these groups is to respect the Afghan Constitution and join the political process.

The Taliban and other insurgent groups should realize that Afghan forces are now capable of securing the country and will never allow terrorist groups to hide, plan and operate from Afghan soil against its people and those of other states.

It's important to reiterate that Afghan security forces do not stand alone in their struggle against these terrorist groups. As ANSF capabilities grow, the U.S. and NATO remain steadfast in helping Afghan troops in the fight against terrorism and extremism. ♦

OMAN POLICE

BEST IN MIDDLE EAST

UNIPATH STAFF

Oman was honored for having one of the most reliable police forces in the world.

In the World Economic Forum's "Global Competitiveness Report," released in October 2018, the Royal Oman Police (ROP) ranked fifth in the world and first in the Arab world for reliability.

It was one of dozens of categories of a Global Competitiveness Index on which 140 countries were ranked to gauge their economic strengths. Oman also ranked best in the world for having the fewest terrorist incidents and fourth best in the world for its relative absence of organized crime.

Omani leaders thanked local residents and the expatriate community for helping the ROP achieve its high ranking

"It's our duty to achieve the highest level of security and safety for all in this dear homeland, as well as harness the human and material resources to build a modern police force with strategic and practical planning to keep abreast of the developments, changes and security phenomena that are taking place in our modern world," one police official informed the *Times of Oman*.

Foreign businessmen living in Oman vouched for



الشرطة

the country's accomplishments in the field of security.

"This is one of the safest countries in the world," said Rajkumar Iqbal Ahmed, chief executive officer of Al Khalij Heavy Equipment and Engineering.

"Wherever you go in this country, even if it is late at night, you know the place is safe for both women and children. Oman is also strategically situated, and people here are really willing to work, so I am not surprised that this place is called the Switzerland of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council]."

The Global Competitiveness Index measures factors that affect productivity based on 12 core categories: institutions, infrastructure, information and communication technology adoption, macroeconomic

POLICE

الشرطة

POLICE

stability, health, skills, product markets, labor markets, financial systems, market size, business dynamism and innovation capacity.

Other areas in which the sultanate scored highly included ranking first among the Arab countries for property rights, intellectual property protection and cooperation between employers and employees. It also is a global leader in using the internet to connect with its citizens, a phenomenon known as e-government.

Overall, the country moved up 14 places on the 2018 competitiveness index, placing 47th out of 140 in the world. ♦

Sources: World Economic Forum, *Times of Oman*

OMAN RANKS HIGHLY AMONG 140 COUNTRIES IN:

Low levels
of terrorism:

1st

Low levels
of organized
crime:

4th

Reliability
of police:

5th

Future
orientation of
government:

7th

Road quality:

8th

Efficiency of
judiciary in
settling disputes:

13th

Mobile phone
subscriptions:

14th

Efficiency of
seaports:

18th

Source: World Economic Forum

UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION



Defending the Homeland

EGYPT'S MILITARY LEADERS EMBRACE THE COUNTRY'S LEGACY OF MILITARY STRENGTH

EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES

Throughout ancient history, Egyptian warriors excelled as archers. Therefore, their country is known as the “Land of the Quiver.” In this land, brave warriors still embody this everlasting honor and heroism ... aspiring to glory in a fierce defense of their homeland.

The Egyptian Ministry of Defense holds a solemn responsibility for leading the world's oldest army, established in Egypt around 3200 B.C. Two of Egypt's key military leaders — Gen. Mohammed Zaki and Lt. Gen. Mohammed Farid — play pivotal and heroic roles in defending their country, particularly in the fight against terrorism.

Gen. Mohammed Zaki is Egypt's minister of defense and military production. Born in 1956, he graduated from the military academy in 1977 and was assigned to the infantry. He rose through the ranks until he was promoted to the rank of general in July 2018.

He has a bachelor's degree in military science and holds all infantry and airborne specialized course certificates. He

also completed several courses, such as the command and staff college course, and a fellowship from Nasser Higher Military Academy, the High War College Course, and Senior Commander Higher Course.

Prior to his current position, Gen. Mohammed held several prestigious commands, most notably commander of the airborne forces and commander of the Egyptian Republican Guard. He received several medals and honors for his military duty and excellent service.

Lt. Gen. Mohammed Farid is chief of staff for the Egyptian Armed Forces. The general staff includes the land forces, the air forces and the Navy, and is supported by the following departments: operations, planning, military education, security and intelligence, and logistics services.

Lt. Gen. Farid was born in 1954. He holds a bachelor's of military science from the Military Academy and a master's of military science. He was appointed chief of staff for the Egyptian Armed Forces in October 2017.

Lt. Gen. Farid served as chief of staff of the Northern Military Zone. He also served as the commander of the Second Field Army and later became secretary-general of the Defense Ministry during a crucial period for the country



Gen. Mohammed Zaki

The Egyptian Ministry of Defense holds a solemn responsibility for leading the world's oldest army, established in Egypt around 3200 B.C. Two of Egypt's key military leaders — Gen. Mohammed Zaki and Lt. Gen. Mohammed Farid — play pivotal and heroic roles in defending their country, particularly in the fight against terrorism.



Lt. Gen.
Mohammed Farid

— the June 30 revolution. He also served as assistant defense minister and secretary of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

During his military career, Lt. Gen. Farid received several medals and awards, including the Medal of Military Duty, Medal of Long Service and Role Model, and Medal of Excellent Service.

According to the Global Firepower Index for 2018, the Egyptian Armed Forces ranked 12th on a list of the world's most powerful militaries from among 136 countries.

The minister of defense is keen to further develop Egypt's military capabilities and its combat readiness through joint exercises and partnerships with friendly forces. A recent example of this was the Arab Shield 1 exercise, held within the framework of the joint training plan implemented by the Egyptian Armed Forces with other countries to develop military relations, counter common challenges and support security and stability efforts in the region.

Gen. Mohammed Zaki asserted that the Egyptian Armed Forces are acting with the utmost vigilance and readiness to impose state sovereignty and secure the country's borders.

"The Egyptian Army is working to confront all those who seek to undermine Egypt's security and stability," Gen. Mohammed said during a 2018 meeting with commanders, officers and troops of the Air Defense Forces.

He praised the historic and national role of the air defense in securing and protecting the skies of Egypt and maintaining control over its airspace. He praised the outstanding performance of Egypt's heroes of air defense, who ranked second in the world in the Clear Sky competition as part of the International Army Games 2018.

The minister of defense pays tribute to the martyrs of the Armed Forces and the police who have sacrificed their lives for their homeland during the ongoing confrontations with the forces of extremism and terrorism.

He expressed his "pride in the series of successes during the battle of honor — Operation Sinai 2018 — fought by heroes of the Armed Forces and police to eliminate terrorism."

Gen. Mohammed regularly talks with his troops to hear their views and field their questions. He praises their situational awareness of critical internal and external events and their promotion of security and stability in the region. That includes the military's role in sponsoring economic development to help average Egyptians prosper.

"The Armed Forces cooperate with all state institutions to support comprehensive development efforts and contribute to the implementation of mega development projects on every inch of the land of Egypt," he said.



Qatar expands Al Udeid Air Base

UNIPATH STAFF

Qatar has allocated \$1.8 billion to modernize Al Udeid Air Base, the main air base the United States uses in its military and counterterrorism operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

According to Deputy Commander of the Qatari Air Force Maj. Gen. Ahmed Ibrahim Al Malki, the expansion is aimed at accommodating new types of aircraft, including French Rafale fighter jets, American F-15 fighters and Eurofighter Typhoon jets.

Qatar signed a \$6.2 billion contract with Boeing for 36 F-15s and a \$6.38 billion contract with BAE Systems to buy 24 Typhoons.

The air base project includes the construction of housing complex and service buildings to support joint security efforts between Qatar and the U.S., as well as improving the quality of life of the troops residing at the air base.

According to Qatari Defense Minister Khaled bin Mohammed al-Attiyah, 200 housing units are part of the development plan, as are new warehouses and training and maintenance facilities.

“These construction projects represent a transition from an expeditionary environment with temporary facilities, to a base with an enduring infrastructure capable of sustaining long-term operations,” a U.S. Air Force spokesman noted.

The base, located 30 kilometers southwest of the capital, Doha, is home to thousands of the U.S. and international coalition forces, making Al Udeid one of the most important bases in the Arabian Gulf region.

As part of its contribution to the fight against terrorism, Qatar offered the U.S.-led coalition use of Al Udeid to launch airstrikes against Daesh.

Sources: Reuters, *The Washington Post*, al-Sharq.com



Qatari Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Minister of State for Defense of Qatar Khaled bin Mohammad al-Attiyah and Qatari Chief of the Army Mubarak Mohammed Al Khayareen at Al Udeid Air Base in Doha on September 11, 2017

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Uzbeks Train Afghan Railway Engineers

UNIPATH STAFF

More than 100 Afghan students have enrolled in a new technical college over the border in Uzbekistan, a school designed to teach the Uzbek language to ethnic Uzbeks from Afghanistan and train a cadre of skilled technicians to improve connectivity and security in Afghanistan.

The campus in Termez, 10 kilometers from the Uzbek-Afghan border, is partly financed by Uzbekistan's government and will offer specialties in fields such as railway engineering and Uzbek language and literature.

A 75-kilometer railroad connecting Hairatan on the Uzbek-Afghan border and Mazar-e Sharif in northern Afghanistan was completed in 2010. Aiming to raise the profile of Afghanistan as a Central Asian transit hub, the project was built by Uzbekistan Railways, a state-owned company.

Plans call for extending the railway to Herat — 730 kilometers from Mazar-e Sharif.

According to Rustam Makhmudov, an Uzbek specialist on Afghanistan, expanding the rail network will require more Afghan professionals to construct and operate. That's where Termez comes in.

"For Uzbekistan, Afghanistan is a big market. This country is of great interest to us in terms of investment. But we need specialists who know how to do this work," Makhmudov said.

Of the initial group of 122 Afghan enrollees in 2018, 11 were women. The Uzbeks are also building a second campus to accommodate 300 more students. Uzbekistan covers more than half the cost of educating each person, amounting to \$2,440 per student.

Sources: Ozodlik, Uza.uz, Ozadagon, Railway Technology

A cargo train passes through Mazar-e Sharif on a rail network partly financed and constructed by Uzbekistan.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Helping Afghanistan Helps the Region

UNIPATH STAFF

Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov called on Central Asian and global leaders to engage constructively with Afghanistan in the name of regional security.

The president's speech at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018 highlighted energy, transportation and communications projects that would serve international strategic interests by encouraging economic growth and stability in Afghanistan.

Turkmenistan has been building a natural gas pipeline called TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) since 2015 and extended railway lines into Afghanistan. Turkmenistan is also installing electrical transmission lines that would link it to Pakistan via Afghanistan, allowing the Kabul government to collect transit fees as well as benefit from an improved supply of electricity.

President Berdimuhamedov also reiterated his country's efforts to suppress regional terrorism and drug trafficking.

"Providing long-term and comprehensive security is a key issue for Central Asian states," he said.

The Turkmen president also cited a recent agreement among Caspian Sea nations that would transform the sea into a "strategic transport, transit and energy hub of international importance." Source: United Nations



Kyrgyzstan Commits to Counterterrorism

UNIPATH STAFF

Kyrgyzstan President Sooronbay Jeenbekov re-emphasized his country's commitment to defeat terrorism in a speech at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018.

President Jeenbekov expressed support for the U.N.'s Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and noted that Kyrgyzstan lies at the crossroads of Central Asian drug trafficking routes used to help finance violent extremism.

Approved in 2006, the U.N. counterterrorism strategy entails not just preventing and fighting terrorism, but also upholding the rule of law and human rights.

The Kyrgyz president emphasized his commitment to parliamentary democracy and anti-corruption measures. Judicial and security sector reform are two prongs of those efforts.

An improved business climate would aid Kyrgyzstan's National Development Strategy, as would agreements among neighboring landlocked countries to stimulate international trade through improved transportation networks.



Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov addresses the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018. REUTERS

In terms of environmental threats, President Jeenbekov stressed the need to secure waste left over from former Soviet uranium mines on Kyrgyz soil. These "tailing ponds" pose a threat to public health and the environment, he said.

Sources: Azattyk, AsiaTV, K News

TAJIKISTAN STRENGTHENS BORDER WITH U.S. AID

UNIPATH STAFF

Tajikistan has received \$8 million worth of military assistance from the United States to counter the movement of illegal drugs and criminals on the 1,400-kilometer Tajik-Afghan border.

The money will pay for patrol vehicles to strengthen border security and construction equipment to build counternarcotics barriers at crossing points between the two countries.

A ceremony recognizing the donation occurred in October 2018 at the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe.

Speaking at the ceremony, Saimumin Yatimov, chairman of Tajikistan's State Committee for National Security, noted that

cooperation with the U.S. has been essential to improve security and fight terrorism.

"Consolidation of militants of the Islamic State and the Taliban in northern provinces of Afghanistan and the existence of drug laboratories require increased vigilance and efforts from the international community," Yatimov said.

The Khatlon region, in Tajikistan's southwest corner, is the province most exposed to problems spilling from Afghanistan. It's there that Tajikistan will use much of the border security donation. Tajik Border Guard Service Commander Radzhabali Rakhmonali reported that the Taliban has

distributed thousands of fighters along the Tajik-Afghan border.

Said Yatimov: "The U.S. government is committed to peace and security in Afghanistan, resistance to extremism, weapons, and the drug trade, and it has been making every effort to strengthen governance in that country. Tajikistan, as part of the international community, supports Washington's initiatives to fight terrorism and the illegal drug trade."

In a partnership approaching 30 years, the U.S. has provided Tajikistan more than \$1.8 billion in development aid.

Sources: Ferghana News, Ozodagon, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, News TJ



SAUDI NAVY PROCURES NEW HELICOPTER

UNIPATH STAFF

Royal Saudi Navy Commander Gen. Fahd bin Abdullah al-Ghufaili launched the country's first MH-60R helicopter in September 2018, part of the kingdom's adoption of top-tier military technology to help stabilize the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia plans to buy 10 MH-60R multirole helicopters from Lockheed Martin's Sikorsky Co. at an estimated cost of \$1.9 billion through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales Program.

Speaking at a ceremony to introduce the helicopter, Gen. al-Ghufaili said the MH-60R will aid Saudi Arabia in achieving its strategic objectives according to the vision and directives of Commander in Chief His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The general praised the aircraft's advanced military technology and capacity to engage in surface and subsurface naval warfare, enhancing the capabilities of Saudi naval forces to improve maritime security.

"The naval combat helicopter project will contribute significantly to strengthening security of the kingdom and will further enhance the Saudi forces in the region," noted a statement by the Saudi Ministry of Defense.

U.S. Navy Adm. Francis Morley said the project was an opportunity to develop the strategic relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States, especially because the Saudi Navy and the U.S. Navy have historical ties. Sources: Arabnews.com, CNN



EGYPT TRAINS WITH ARAB PARTNERS

UNIPATH STAFF



AP/GETTY IMAGES

Egypt hosted what it called the first joint Arab military exercise on its soil. Military forces from six Arab countries gathered at Mohammed Najib Military Base near Alexandria during November 2018 for the Arab Shield 1 exercise.

Troops from Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates participated in the joint training, which lasted nine days and included ground, air and naval forces.

The exercise was part of an effort to strengthen military cooperation between Egypt and its Middle Eastern partners to maintain security and restore stability to the region. A spokesman for Egyptian forces called Arab Shield one of best

exercises in the Arab world to optimize the use of modern weapons and state of the art equipment.

Brig. Gen. Abdullah bin Hussein al-Subaie, commander of the Saudi forces participating in the exercise, noted that Arab Shield is a key part of the country's annual training plan.

Troops learned to conduct counterterrorism operations, clear and secure border villages, handle improvised explosive devices, drop military supplies from aircraft and secure coastlines.

The nine days of field training were followed by a senior leader seminar that included lectures by officers from participating countries. The Lebanese and Royal Moroccan Armed Forces sent observers. *Source: Al-Ahram*

SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

UNIPATH STAFF

Praised by then Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbayev for improving security in Central Asia, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) celebrated 20 years in the country in October 2018.

During those two decades, the OSCE has sponsored more than 1,000 military, political, economic and humanitarian projects in Kazakhstan. Thousands of Kazakhstanis participate in such projects each year.

The national capital of Nur-Sultan was the scene of an

international conference marking Kazakhstan's 20-year anniversary as a member of the organization. Speakers included OSCE Secretary-General Thomas Greming.

"We support [Kazakhstan's] key national reforms, including police reforms. We need to mobilize our forces and resources in order to quickly begin implementing the reforms. This is where we want to further develop the partnership," Greming said.

Tuleubek Mukashev, secretary of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Relations, Defense and

Security of the Kazakhstani Senate, noted the importance of heightened cooperation with international and regional organizations, including the OSCE.

Mukashev said the threats of extremism and terrorism necessitate merging the efforts of OSCE member states to develop an effective counterstrategy. He expressed Kazakhstan's desire to create a special committee on combating terrorism within the OSCE to allow parliamentarians to address issues related to terrorism.

Sources: Total.kz, 24.kz, Delovoy Kazakhstan, Bnews.kz



Iraq Seeks Jordanian Partnership

UNIPATH STAFF

During a meeting in Baghdad in October 2018, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Ali al-Hakim and Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi agreed to form a committee to strengthen security cooperation, protection of their common border and trade.

Bilateral cooperation in terms of energy, particularly electricity, and Jordanian companies' participation in Iraqi reconstruction projects were among the topics discussed in the meeting, Foreign Minister al-Hakim said.

Foreign Minister Safadi, meeting at Iraq's Presidential Palace with Iraqi President Barham Salih, repeated his country's desire to strengthen relations with its eastern neighbor.

"The king sent with me a message to you in which he reiterated the kingdom's support of Iraq at all levels," Safadi said.

In related business, Tariq Al-Hammouri, Jordan's minister of industry, trade and supply, led trade talks aimed at exempting Jordanian imports from Iraqi customs duties.

Al-Hammouri headed a large delegation of businessmen to the Baghdad International Fair, which took place in November 2018, and held bilateral meetings with the Iraqi authorities about reviving commercial relations.

The fair attracted 45 Jordanian companies from various industrial sectors, supported by the Investment Commission and the Amman Chamber of Industry. In 2017, Iraqi authorities discussed dropping import taxes on 571 Jordanian products, but have yet to implement the law.

The two countries reopened the Trebil border crossing in August 2017 — after the destruction of Daesh in its final stronghold of Mosul — but the volume of cross-border trade remains below desirable levels.

Jordan's Department of Statistics noted that the country's exports to Iraq rose by 35.2 percent in the first eight months of 2018 to 287.8 million Jordanian dinars. Sources: Alghad.com, Elaph

Jordan and Iraq's reopened border crossing

GETTY IMAGES

Kuwaiti Forces Launch Joint Exercise

UNIPATH STAFF

Kuwaiti troops joined forces with their French counterparts to complete the Pearl of the West exercise in November 2018.

Pearl of the West was held in accordance with a 1992 Security Cooperation Agreement between the two countries and is designed to raise the performance and combat efficiency of Kuwaiti ground, air and naval forces.

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense acclaimed the 2018 exercise the largest ever. Thousands of troops participated. Drills included the use of live ammunition at the shooting range complex northwest of Kuwait City.

French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy noted that Pearl of the West is one of several defense cooperation endeavors between the two countries.

For example, Kuwait concluded a deal with the French to buy 30 sophisticated Caracal helicopters for the Kuwaiti Air Force and National Guard to use in search and rescue operations, maritime operations, medical evacuation and military transport.

In addition, both countries contributed to the international coalition to defeat Daesh. To accomplish that mission, French Soldiers deployed to Camp Arifjan in Kuwait.

In late October 2018, Lt. Gen. Mohammed Al-Khader, chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, discussed security cooperation with his French counterpart in Paris.

Source: Kuwait News Agency



AFP/GETTY IMAGES



UAE TESTS FLYING MOTORCYCLES

UNIPATH STAFF



The United Arab Emirates could be one of the first countries to capture criminals using flying motorcycles that can bypass congested roads by taking to the air.

Brig. Gen. Khalid Nasser Alrazooqi, director of the Dubai police artificial intelligence unit, aims to use the electric motorcycles as first responders.

Called hoverbikes, they are equipped with four drone-like vertical propellers that thrust them as high as 16 feet in the air.

Brig. Gen. Khalid has established the ambitious goal of equipping his force with the new technology by 2020. Two police crews are already training to drive the motorcycles, he told CNN.

Dozens of companies, many in the United States, are competing to develop the first commercially viable electric flying vehicles. Dubai is testing a motorcycle developed by a California company called Hoversurf.

Hoversurf's prototype weighs about 250 pounds and moves as fast as 60 miles per hour. One drawback is its driving range — current battery technology ensures an electric charge lasts only 10-20 minutes.

Until range improves, Dubai police would need to make their arrests in a hurry. Source: CNN

An Emirati police officer sits on a flying motorcycle at the Dubai World Trade Center.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Yemeni Women Reduce Conflict

UNIPATH STAFF

Yemeni women gathered in Amman, Jordan, in November 2018 to outline ways to ease the conflict raging in their homeland.

United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Martin Griffiths chaired a meeting of the Yemeni women's technical advisory group, created during peace talks in 2013 to give women a greater voice in the country's civil affairs.

"It is the women of Yemen who pay the highest price of the war; the voice of women is crucial to build peace," technical advisory group member

Somaya Al-Hussam told the U.N.

Somaya's contribution to local conflict resolution in Yemen has been profound. The U.N. praised her for mediating a dispute between two tribes that had taken the lives of dozens of people.

"For this particular dispute, all the parties were responsive. They fully engaged with the mediation efforts. And no, they did not refuse to deal with a woman. I was able to win their confidence and work with them to reach a settlement," she said.

Somaya admitted that such resolutions remain fragile in a country suffering from civil war. She plans to remain in Yemen to highlight the value of dialogue, peace and coexistence.

"A nationwide peace cannot be achieved without peace-building efforts at the local level," she said.

The Yemeni women's advisory group operates under the guidance of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, which stress the inclusion of women in creating and maintaining peace and security.

Sources: United Nations, *Al Ayyam*



Missions Over Bahrain

UNIPATH STAFF

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Air forces from across the Middle East trained together in Bahrain in November 2018 to reaffirm their defensive partnership.

Despite heavy rain, multinational aircraft split the sky over the Arabian Gulf during the Basic Liaison 2018 exercise hosted by the Bahrain Defense Force.

Participating directly were air forces from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman and Pakistan participated as observers.

The exercise began with advanced tactical joint air defense operations and command and control missions in airspace allotted to Basic Liaison. Commanders praised the high efficiency displayed by flight crews.

Basic Liaison 2018 — preparations for which lasted about a year — was one of the most important and best

attended aerial exercises in the region. It was a continuation of a series of exercises held since 1988.

"Basic Liaison 2018 exercise is one of the most vital exercises carried out by the Royal Bahraini Air Force, and it receives great attention from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa," the Bahraini commander at the exercise said.

Some of the military observers promised greater involvement at future exercises, including an officer from Jordan.

"We in the Royal Jordanian Air Force are keen to participate in the Basic Liaison exercise because of its usefulness in developing the joint work between our air forces," he said. "The exercise is one of the most outstanding exercises on how an air force may conduct air operations missions."

Its is one of several exercises engaging forces from the Arabian Gulf. Source: *Al Ayyam*



Loyalty to Lebanon

UNIPATH STAFF

Calling for unity in the fight against terrorism and instability, Lebanese military leaders graduated a fresh crop of young officers in November 2018.

Lebanese Army Commander Gen. Joseph Aoun presided at the graduation ceremony at Tripoli Municipal Stadium, joined by Brig. Gen. Yaqoub Muawad, commander of the Army's 12th Brigade.

Brig. Gen. Muawad commended graduates on their decision to join the Army to defend the homeland and preserve its dignity at this critical time.

"These men, who come from all over the country, reflect the cohesion between the military establishment and Lebanese society and the overall role played by the Army. Servicemen and women carry out their mission as an integrated team united by one goal

and common thought, adhering to discipline and setting an example for Lebanese youths to follow," Brig. Gen. Muawad said.

He called on the young officers to follow the path of "honor, sacrifice and loyalty" as they began their military careers. In recent years, Lebanese forces have rebuffed attempts by Daesh-affiliated terrorists to take over towns in the northern part of the country.

"In our dear country, there is no choice but to unite and fight division and discord to deter anyone trying to undermine our stability, especially terrorism, which has suffered successive defeats, but is still seeking to exploit any opportunity to destabilize," the brigadier general said.

Source: Alnashra.com



Lebanese Army cadets celebrate graduation on Army Day at a military school in Fayadiyeh.

AFP/GETTYIMAGES

Jordan, Pakistan Advocate Defense Cooperation

UNIPATH STAFF

In a meeting between His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein of Jordan and Pakistan Army Chief of Staff Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, the two countries vowed to become stronger security partners.

Gen. Bajwa's official three-day visit to Amman in October 2018 resulted in a promise to hold more joint military exercises, increase training and partner in the production of armaments.

Jordan's king awarded the Order of the Military Merit to Gen. Bajwa for his efforts to improve defense and security relations between the countries. Pakistani dignitaries also attended a counterterrorism drill by the King Abdullah II Special Forces Group at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center.

The defense relationship between Jordan and Pakistan was also the topic of a meeting between Gen. Bajwa and Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Freihath, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of Jordan Armed Forces.

Gen. Freihath praised Pakistan as a reliable partner that share's Jordan's strategic views and suggested taking their bilateral security relationship to the next level.

Sources: Pakistan Armed Forces, The Jordan Times



Snipers Compete in Kazakhstan

UNIPATH STAFF

Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense hosted an international sniper competition in August 2018 attended by dozens of the world's best military marksmen.

Called Altyn Uki (Golden Owl) 2018, the five-day competition attracted snipers from countries such as Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The United States and the United Arab Emirates sent observers.

The eighth annual competition was held at the Spassk Training Center in the Karaganda region, a lightly populated area of vast steppes, providing ideal terrain for unobstructed sniping.

The 2018 competition was the largest ever and attracted some countries for the first time. It included shooting exercises, either solo or in pairs, that involved hitting targets as distant as 900 meters.

Golden Owl, held under the auspices of the Central Asia Forum for Sniper Arts, aims to establish strong professional ties and information sharing among snipers. Source: Bnews.kz



Competitors take aim during Altyn Uki.

KAZAKHSTAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE





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