

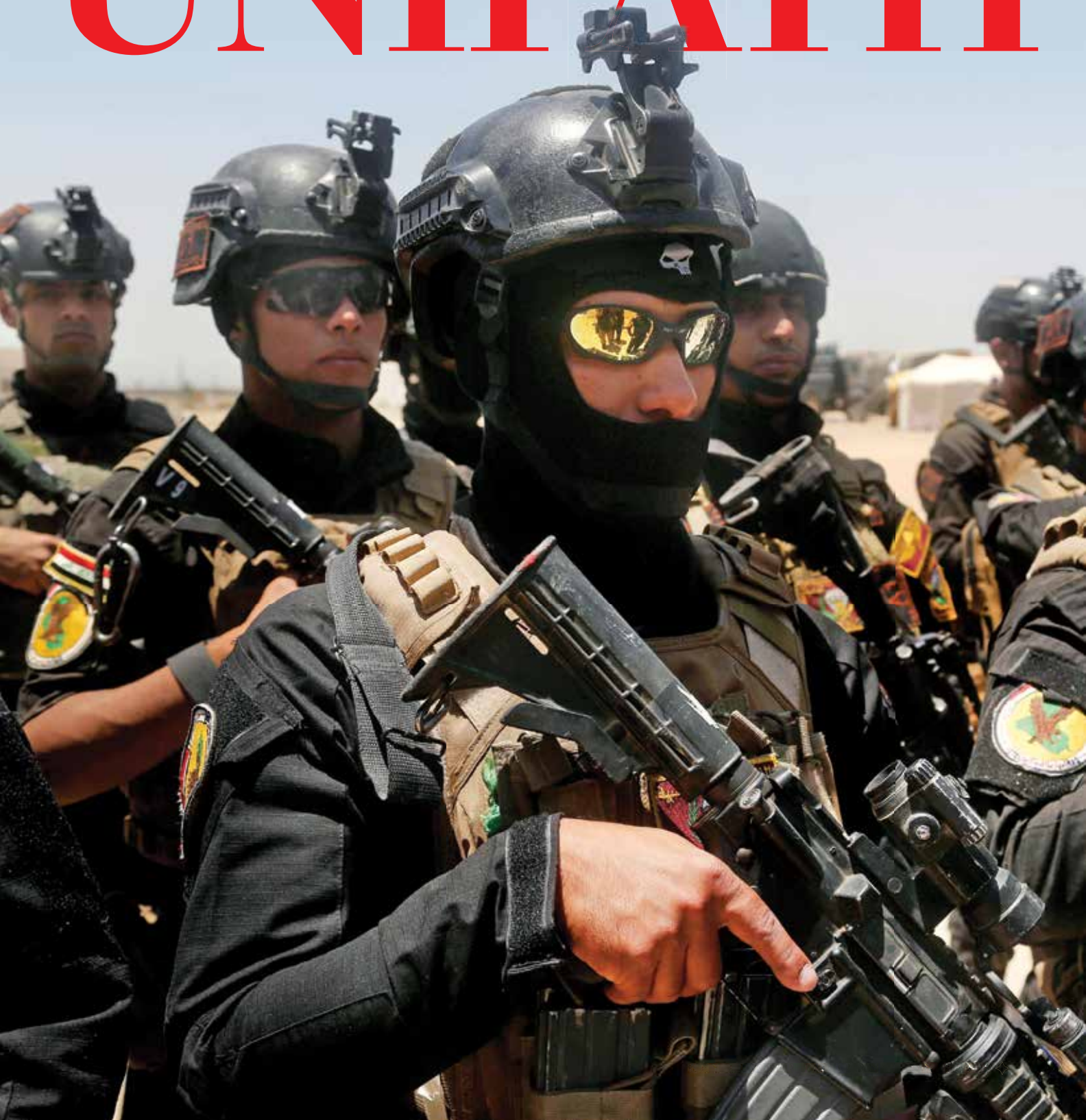
KEY LEADER EDITION

**Tribal Forces  
Fight Terrorists**

**Squeezing Daesh's  
Finances Reaps Rewards**

**Navies Protect  
the Arabian Gulf**

# UNIPATH





**Sheikh Abdulla Bin  
Zaid Al Mahmoud  
Islamic Cultural  
Center, Qatar**

ISTOCK





**Muscat Harbor with  
Riyam Park Monument in  
the background, Oman**  
ISTOCK



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 6 Tribal Forces Play Key Role

Local fighters have helped liberate Iraqi cities from terrorists

## 10 Security at Sea

More than 30 nations participated in the International Mine Countermeasures Exercise in Bahrain

## 14 Dawn of Destruction for Daesh

A senior Iraqi commander expresses his gratitude for a U.S.-Iraqi operation that routed a terrorist convoy

By Lt. Gen. Falah Hasan,  
deputy commander, Iraqi Air Force

## 18 Logistical Lessons

Generals will attend the Gulf Cooperation Council Logistics Interoperability Symposium in Doha in December 2016

## 20 Defeating Daesh from the Air

Helicopters from Iraq's Army Air Wing play a critical role against terrorism

## 24 The Attack on Terror Financing

Destroying Daesh will require destroying its means of support

## 28 Ending the Mirage

A United Arab Emirates scholar outlines a case for reducing religious extremism

By Dr. Jamal Sanad Al-Suwaidi,  
Emirates Center for Strategic  
Studies and Research

## 32 Safeguarding Cyberspace

The Central Region Communications Conference draws experts from the Middle East, Central Asia and the United States

## 38 Strength in Unity

Egyptian Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Hegazy discusses joint security and the terrorism threat

By Staff Lt. Col. Yousef Al Hadad,  
*Nation Shield* magazine,  
United Arab Emirates

## 42 Stemming the Flow of Foreign Fighters

Coalition nations take a multifaceted approach to defeating Daesh

## 48 Pakistanis Return Home

Civil-military cooperation helps clear terrorists from regions of Pakistan

By Shahid Sadiq and Jacob Doyle

## 54 Managing the Message

Coalition partners work toward increasing coordination in the information war against Daesh

By John Redfield, U.S. Central  
Command Public Affairs

## 56 Senior Leader Profile

Afghan Maj. Gen. Bismillah Waziri

## 58 Around the Region



### ON THE COVER:

Iraq's elite counterterrorism forces gather ahead of the successful operation to retake Fallujah. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## UNIPATH

### Combating Violent Extremism

Volume 7, Number 1



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GENERAL  
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## KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE

**I**t is a pleasure to accept the invitation of U.S. Central Command to introduce the latest edition of *Unipath* magazine, which focuses on countering violent extremism. First, I would like to acknowledge the role of the magazine in highlighting the heroism of the Iraqi Armed Forces and Counter Terrorism Service to defeat Daesh. This war needed essential support from a balanced regional and international media to show the progress of our Armed Forces and expose the lies of terrorists. We are facing an enemy that has tentacles throughout the region and the world, including promoters, financiers, recruiters and sleeper cells. So we must unite to share security information to defeat terror. The alternative is allowing these murderers to destroy more cities, kill and displace thousands of innocents and repeat what happened in Raqqa, Mosul and Anbar. The terrorists don't differentiate between nations and care nothing about religion or ethnicity; they kill Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Daesh depends on deceiving young Muslims with lies and propaganda spread on social media or malicious satellite TV stations. Its media machine played a huge role in recruiting specific groups of young men with poor educations and poor understanding of true Islam. These recruits followed despicable voices that called for beheading, destroying places of worship, bombing public facilities and igniting a holocaust of ethno-sectarian war in destabilized areas.

Regional security is linked, as Gen. Talib Shaghati Alkenani, director of the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service, has mentioned on many occasions. We need only consider the consequences of leaving the terrorist movement unchecked in Syria in 2012, which led to horrific events in Iraq and the region. At the time, some referred to Daesh terrorists as mujahedeen and excused their crimes; extremist clerics in some neighboring nations were fundraising and praising Daesh's actions. The result was that the group became powerful enough to threaten global peace and stability. Unfortunately, some individuals supported Daesh publicly for twisted sectarian motives until the world rallied to fight Daesh. They had not learned the lesson from supporting the same group in 2006, which also led to painful sectarian violence in Iraq.

We Iraqis have long experience dealing with these



gangs that go by different names. We recognized the consequences of leaving terrorists to operate freely in remote conflict zones. We warned our friends and neighbors not to ignore the freedom of movement terrorist groups enjoyed in and around Syria. We were precise in predicting that these terrorist gangs would spread like a disease throughout the region. This is exactly what happened two years later as Daesh

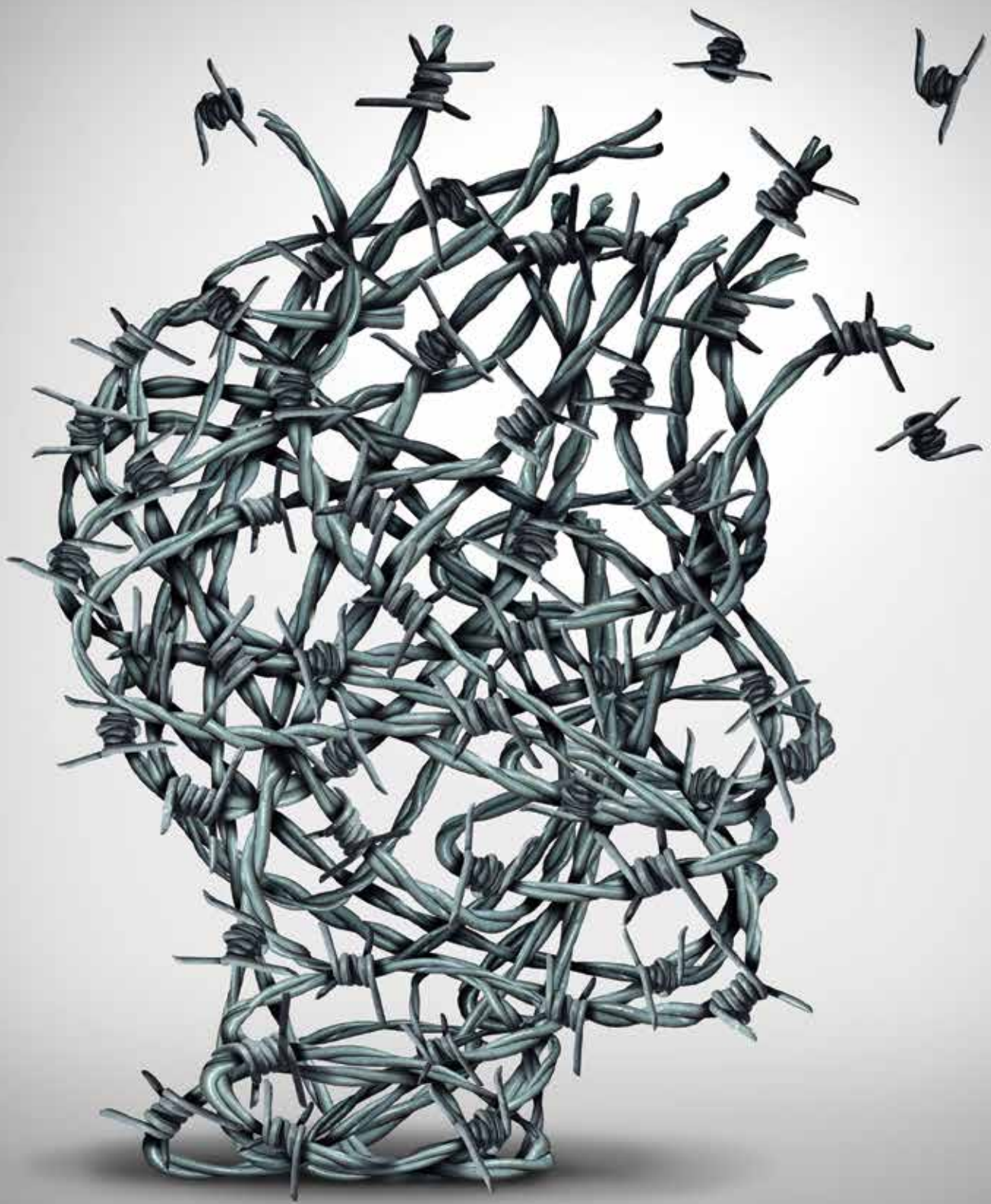
invaded cities in northern and western Iraq. Without the bravery and skills of our security forces to halt the advance of Daesh, the disaster would have been greater. Meanwhile, the terrorists expanded their attacks to reach Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, North Africa, Egypt, Europe, Libya and the Gulf region, where Daesh sends criminals to bomb innocents.

It is impossible to defeat Daesh in one battle, despite the capabilities and weapons of the militaries fighting it. Weapons alone can't defeat extremist ideology. Furthermore, Daesh is the enemy not only of Iraq, but the entire civilized world. The terrorist attacks in Paris, Turkey and the United States are good examples of that.

All nations must unify their media messages to reject violence and promote tolerance. Religious leaders of all sects must denounce separatism and unite Muslims in good faith and transparency to prevent infiltration by extremism. Security agencies should track terrorist activities on social media and stop those that promote extremist ideology. We must pass laws to stop takfiri clerics from targeting and deceiving vulnerable young Muslims. We must raise this generation to respect human life as a gift from God and insist that no one has the power to revoke this gift. We must empower and educate citizens to be our ears and eyes when it comes to rooting out terrorists. We must build partnerships among allies to share information to track and stop terrorists and dry up their financial support.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to Iraq's friends and their continued commitment to support our security forces and people in the war against Daesh. International cooperation has played a critical role in training and arming our forces, and coalition air power destroyed strategic targets to help our forces win battles in record time with minimum casualties.

**Lt. Gen. Abd Alwahab Al Saidi, Iraqi Armed Forces**



# Tribal Forces PLAY KEY ROLE



## LOCAL FIGHTERS HAVE HELPED LIBERATE IRAQI CITIES FROM TERRORISTS

UNIPATH STAFF  
PHOTOS BY IRAQI ARMED FORCES



The war against terrorism is complex because the enemy is entrenched among civilians and uses innocents as human shields. Daesh terrorizes populations by savagely murdering and humiliating innocent people and spreading its propaganda through social media. However, the terror-

ists fail miserably in gaining the support or acceptance of local residents. The criminal behavior of the foreign fighters shows no respect for local norms, and they have no remorse about spilling innocent blood and insulting respected figures in the community. As a result, Daesh faces a critical challenge in recruiting fighters and finding local support. Daesh frequently conducts operations to capture and kill local citizens to further intimidate the population. However, these crimes make people more determined to reject Daesh and establish tribal forces to liberate cities and prevent Daesh's return to their hometowns. *Unipath* interviewed Iraqi Lt. Gen. Rashid Falaeh, commander of the tribal battalions, about these forces and their role in defeating Daesh.

**UNIPATH:** What is the rationale behind the tribal battalions in Iraq?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** Actually, it is not new for the Iraqi tribes to fight terrorists; they fought bravely and defeated al-Qaida in Iraq in 2006. At the time, U.S. and Iraqi forces weren't able to defeat the group alone. The tribesmen joined after al-Qaida attempted to humiliate the sheikhs. In 2014, terrorists reached the outskirts of Baghdad, where all Iraqis teamed up to defend their cities, including the Sunni tribesmen who fought courageously to liberate

and defend their towns. Frankly, the tribesmen were fighting Daesh before these units were established. But they were not fighting under centralized command and control and with support fire or logistical coordination. Additionally, sometimes these forces fought without notification or prior arrangement with armed forces in the area, which complicated the battlefield and made it vulnerable to friendly fire. After establishing this command, we were able to move operations to higher levels, assign weaponry and better organize our forces. These men fought and held ground in a way that is comparable to our conventional forces and, in some instances, they fought alongside their brothers in the Iraqi military.

**UNIPATH:** Who leads these tribal battalions?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** The leaders are those with experience serving the tribes, but not necessarily the tribal chiefs. Among them are former military and security forces officers, whether retired or not enlisted in the new military. About 30 percent of the commanders are former officers. They left the profession to work in the private sector, but find it essential now to bear the arms and liberate their towns from the disgrace of terror and enforce security and stability for the future of their children and the unity of their nation. This proves their loyalty to their nation despite the differences of political views that Daesh once exploited to recruit and use them.

**UNIPATH:** Where do these battalions fight?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** These forces stretch across the theater and provide support to military units in the area. We have six battalions in Amiriyat al-Fallujah, four battalions in Garma, four battalions in Hadetha, and we have battalions in Habaniya, Khalidya and Baghdadi. But our





Iraqi Lt. Gen. Rashid Falaeh visits the battlefield.



Iraqi Lt. Gen. Rashid Falaeh and tribal leaders appear at a news conference.

main force of 11 battalions is positioned in Ramadi. In addition, we have battalions still in training camp. We prepare them to handle the security of the cities that the Armed Forces are about to liberate. The training is conducted in Iraq military bases and concentrates on enforcing security and stability, providing assistance to local residents and identifying the suspects, as well as basic training about weapons and soldierly conduct.

**UNIPATH:** Is there a relationship between former awakening leaders and the battalions?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** No relation at all, but our forces include many former warriors who fought al-Qaida in Iraq in the past. As I mentioned earlier, the tribal men are brave and known as knights and courageous fighters who reject injustice. These values are what made them volunteer to defeat the Zarqawi gangs in the past and that motivate them to fight Daesh today.

**UNIPATH:** Are these forces organized by single tribes led by sheikhs?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** No. Because we are a modern state, we shift the loyalty of the tribe to the loyalty of the nation by creating units from multiple tribes outside the narrow scope of tribes and clans. We don't view a man based on the stand of his sheikh but on his love of Iraq. For example, we are aware of the betrayal by the sheikh of the Jumaila tribe in Fallujah; however, that never impacted our decision to make tribe member Jumaa al-Jumaili deputy commander of the tribal battalions. That's because al-Jumaili is known for his bravery in fighting the terrorists and an example of a good citizen. We are not asking the sheikhs to hold an AK-47 and maintain a post on the front lines, despite many of them doing so. We ask the sheikhs to denounce and condemn the crimes of Daesh on public forums and encourage their followers to defend tribal values and norms that Daesh tries to violate. I must mention that there are

six tribes that played a significant role to defeat terror and made huge sacrifices to defend their territory, like Al-Jaghaifa, Albu Issa, Albu Fahaid, Albu Alwan and Albu Namir.

**UNIPATH:** Have any tribes served with special distinction?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** Almost all the tribes have served honorably, but I don't want to be viewed as being biased toward one tribe over another. I want the Iraqi people to be proud of all their tribes for their bravery in fighting Daesh. Nevertheless, I would like to note the heroic resistance of Albu Issa in Amiriyat al-Fallujah. These brave men played an upright role in stopping Daesh's advance toward Baghdad and refused to negotiate with the terrorists. This happened during the peak of Daesh's invasion, when it was moving and destroying anything in its path and demanding obedience under penalty of death. Daesh asked them to let its fighters pass through its territory toward Baghdad and cover their backs, and in return Daesh would forgive them for the past. Albu Issa's response was loud and clear: The path to Baghdad led only over their dead bodies. This honorable stand earned this tribe tremendous respect among Iraqis. Their pride and dignity wouldn't let them betray their nation to these savage killers.

**UNIPATH:** How are these forces trained?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** Most of them were former military, but we provide fast-track training courses at the Habaniya military training base by Iraqi trainers. Others were trained by U.S. forces. I would like to recognize the tremendous support of our partners in the U.S. forces for their continued support in training and mobilization of this newly established force and for their commitment to the security agreement to stand behind the Iraqi people to support the political process in the new Iraq.



**UNIPATH:** How do you select and vet fighters to make sure they are not terrorists trying to infiltrate the units?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** This is our greatest challenge, because Daesh is trying to shake the trust among Iraqis and ignite sectarian war to weaken the nation. A few days ago, we detained a terrorist suspect who came as a volunteer, and last month we detained a suspect who passed the prescreening and attended 10 days of training before he was identified. But this never shakes our faith and unity. Iraqis already defeated the terrorist plot to make us kill each other in 2006, and we will continue to do so. The preliminary interrogation of both suspects indicated that Daesh wants to cultivate spies and suicide bombers inside the tribal battalions to stab tribesmen in the back. No one can predict people's motives, but we have a precise security database and the support of the military intelligence, and we depend on the tips of trusted citizens who know their tribesmen.

**UNIPATH:** Is there a story of a fighter you would like to honor?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** As I mentioned earlier, I don't want to favor one story over another because all of our tribal warriors have stories of bravery and honor that make the forthcoming generation proud. But I would like to tell the story of an elderly man on the Amiriyat al-Fallujah front. His name is Haji Hayl Al-Esawi. This man, despite his age, insisted he fight on the front line. He lost two of his three sons last year in the battle against Daesh. When his commander asked him to leave the harsh living conditions at the front to the younger fighters, he smiled humbly and replied, "I owe Daesh vengeance and must seek retribution for my sons from the terrorists; otherwise my tribesmen won't respect me." He maintained his post on the front lines and gained the respect of all fighters. Recently, he received news of the death of his third son in the fighting but refused to leave the fight to engage in traditional mourning. He said that whoever wanted to offer their condolences, let them come and fight Daesh with him. His loyalty and strength empower the young fighters.

**UNIPATH:** What challenges face this force?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** First, we must make it clear to some politicians that this force was not established to aid an election campaign or to back one political entity over another, nor to invade Baghdad or Karbala. Second, we must make it clear to the local politicians of Ramadi that this force belongs to all of Anbar, and we must support it for the sake of security and stability. And please don't pick out isolated and personal mistakes to discredit the great efforts. Unfortunately, some politicians view things from a gain and loss perspective and not through the national security angle. When this force was established,

we thought out of the box and gave Anbar residents an opportunity to join us. We didn't receive any lists from sheikhs wanting to negotiate personal gains, and we didn't accept lists from politicians trying to own the loyalty of the fighters. The huge challenge is the future of this force because it depends on political decisions and the government's willingness to deal with it. The majority of the volunteers are concerned that their fate will be similar to the awakening fighters who were let go after securing their towns and became easy targets for the terrorists. But we already have a statement from the prime minister and commander in chief to integrate this force into the military and local police in the near future and employ the elderly in the local government and municipalities. Another issue is the economic challenges we are enduring. I would like to ask for financial and moral support from regional and Western nations as we fight terrorists on their behalf.

**UNIPATH:** How successfully did this force achieve its primary goals?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** It is too early to assess this, but we are moving in the right direction. Our primary goal is to liberate all territories and deny the terrorists the ability to return. We are facing an enemy that has no respect for innocent lives, kills women and children, and destroys cities, and therefore we must stop them from entering the cities and entrenching among civilians. I would like the world to know that Iraq's military has the capability and advanced weapons to destroy Daesh. The reason this has not been done quickly is that these cities are full of innocents and we don't want to risk their lives by using heavy artillery and tanks. Civilians in these cities and towns have seen enough, and we must carefully select the best plan to protect and liberate them. I feel that we will achieve our objectives when security and stability are restored and will be able to honor all the promises of our government to find a permanent solution for these fighters. Our goal is for citizens from southern Iraq to travel to the farthest point in Anbar and Mosul and the citizens of Anbar and Mosul to visit the south without fear of kidnapping and death.

**UNIPATH:** Do you have anything to say in closing?

**LT. GEN. RASHID:** The Ramadi liberation would never have happened without the outstanding airpower support of coalition forces. The airstrikes were precise and successful because of the coordination between intelligence and tribesmen. They destroyed Daesh's defensive lines and cost them significant losses. Tribesmen played a significant role in providing information on formations, weapon caches and routes, which made this operation a great case study for the military academy. ♦



# SECURITY



More than 30 nations participated in the International  
Mine Countermeasures Exercise in Bahrain

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UNIPATH STAFF

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multinational Soldiers, poised with automatic rifles, stormed and swarmed onto the deck of an Arabian Gulf fishing dhow, shouting and firing as they

dipped below deck to take out terrorists and tear open metal bins suspected of hiding smuggled weapons or drugs.

These troops came from afar to participate for the first time in the International Mine Countermeasures Exercise (IMCMEX) based out of Manama, Bahrain.

The dhow was actually docked on dry land, hauled to the Bahraini naval base to serve as a training vessel for multinational troops. The drill simulated searching and seizing a boat, if not the actual complexities of boarding a vessel in rolling seas.

Things were even more high-tech about 450 kilometers up the coast in Kuwait, where Kuwaiti, American and other multinational Sailors used robotically guided underwater drones to detect and scoop dummy mines from harbors vital to the country's economic security.

Jordanian divers did much of the same 1,200 kilometers to the west off the critical port of Aqaba, and another multinational military force conducted counterpiracy operations in the Red Sea, practicing on the huge Maersk Atlantic container ship.

"We believe that the threat from nonstate actors to international commerce is real, and by doing this exercise we can help mitigate it," Vice Adm. Kevin Donegan, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, said of the nearly three-week military exercise in April 2016. "We look at nonstate actors that have potential capabilities to disrupt sea traffic, ranging from al-Qaida to ISIS and even to the Houthis."

The sweep and scope of IMCMEX 16 was vast, tracing a watery arc from southern Iraq, down the Arabian Gulf, through the Strait of Hormuz, brushing Oman and

Yemen and running the length of the Red Sea all the way to Aqaba and Egypt. This is all familiar territory to the three multinational task forces that patrol sections of these waters — Combined Task Forces 150, 151 and 152.

Thirty-four nations participated in IMCMEX 16, including Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait and Pakistan. The defensive exercise was designed to promote maritime security, expose troops to the latest in training and equipment and improve interoperability, not just among militaries, but with the civilian fleets that rely on navies for protection.

It's no coincidence that the region is home to three of the world's most strategic choke points when it comes to transporting oil — the Suez Canal, the Bab el Mandeb and the Strait of Hormuz. Leaders such as Maj. Gen. Khaled Al-Kandari, commander



**Members of the Bahrain Defence Force demonstrate visit, board, search and seizure tactics during the IMCMEX in April 2016.** CHIEF PETTY OFFICER ERIKA CARRILLO/U.S. NAVY

of the Kuwaiti Navy, expressed the desire to strengthen cooperation to defend international waters in and around the Arabian Gulf. “The exercises in Kuwait will focus on infrastructure and operations of maritime security and search and rescue missions and escorting commercial ships and oil tanker protection,” Maj. Gen. Al-Kandari said as Kuwaiti, American and European Sailors trained together on the Kuwaiti waterfront at IMCMEX.

IMCMEX began with a conference in Manama that attracted some of the region’s top naval commanders and shipping industry executives. The Maritime Infrastructure Protection Symposium highlighted the world’s growing dependence on shipping lanes whose traffic has quadrupled in the past 30 years.

The recent Somali pirate crisis illustrates how small groups of criminals can wreak havoc on international shipping in the absence of multinational naval forces to keep the peace. Even the growing popularity of cruise ships raises risks: The largest such pleasure vessels hold 6,000 passengers, a capacity larger than the biggest U.S. aircraft carriers. In fact, during the exercise, Britain’s Royal Navy demonstrated sea lane protection by escorting two cruise ships — the RMS Queen Mary II and RMS Queen Elizabeth — across the Gulf of Oman.

But maritime infrastructure includes much more than ships. Commercial ports, naval bases, oil terminals and derricks, fiber optic cables, pipelines, bridges and tunnels also require protection.

“Keeping the peace at sea is our duty as

naval forces,” said Brig. Gen. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Khalifa, commander of the Royal Bahrain Naval Forces.

Underwater mines and seaborne improvised explosive devices remain a threat to global shipping lanes. It was such a threat the IMCMEX participants addressed in places like Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan during tactical displays that involved about 4,000 personnel aboard 30 ships and on shore. To locate and destroy mines, technology has partly replaced what was once a more dangerous and expensive operation involving aerial patrols and human divers. Remote-controlled unmanned boats approach suspicious objects on the surface, and lightweight submersible drones equipped with sonar can plunge 100 meters in a search-and-destroy mission against more deeply laid objects.

The USS Ponce, a 45-year-old U.S. Navy ship that services and resupplies the multinational minesweeping fleet in the Arabian Gulf, accommodated personnel from 20 partner nations during the exercise. The ship also employs mine-sniffing seals trained to detect underwater explosives. When a seal touches its nose to the mine, it triggers a device on its back that releases a flag to the surface that Sailors can spot. “They’ll do anything for a fish,” Capt. Ken Reilley joked.

Another high-tech ship, the USNS Choctaw County, is made of unpainted aluminum to give it a lighter weight, faster speed and resistance to magnetic mines. It can maneuver close to shore in water only 13 feet deep. The ship raced Soldiers and supplies from Bahrain to Kuwait during



**Coalition ships sail in formation in the Arabian Gulf during IMCMEX 16, which attracted participants from 34 countries.**

PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS TREVOR ANDERSON/U.S. NAVY





**Kuwaiti  
divers raise a  
simulated mine  
as part of a  
multinational  
training event  
at IMCMEX in  
April 2016.**

PETTY OFFICER 1ST  
CLASS BLAKE MIDNIGHT/  
U.S. NAVY

IMCMEX. Part of USS Ponce's crew and all of USNS Choctaw County's crew consists of civilian Sailors, a cost-savings measure that allows Arabian Gulf forces to do more with fewer Soldiers and Sailors.

To test the skills of divers and Sailors, IMCMEX directors planted 161 dummy mines in the waters off Jordan, Kuwait and elsewhere and graded troops on how well they "mowed the grass," slang for clearing mines. "You couldn't just show up and declare success. You actually had to get in the water," Adm. Donegan said of participation from partner nations.

Joining U.S. and British vessels, Japan, Kuwait and Pakistan supplied ships for training purposes. Organizers hope to grow the exercise and look forward to Arabian Gulf partner nations assuming an even more prominent role.

Donegan hoped that exercises such as IMCMEX can help promote predictability and professionalism when it comes to "unplanned encounters at sea."

That means countries such as Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, UAE and the U.S. operate together using the same approach to potential threats.

"All of us depend on each other," Adm. Donegan said. ♦

# DAWN OF DESTRUCTION FOR DAESH

**A SENIOR IRAQI COMMANDER  
EXPRESSES HIS GRATITUDE FOR  
A US-IRAQI OPERATION THAT  
ROUTED A TERRORIST CONVOY**

**BY LT. GEN. FALAH HASAN, DEPUTY COMMANDER, IRAQI AIR FORCE**





**F**or the historical record, I would like to mention some important details about the enormous airstrike that broke the back of Daesh in Iraq in late June 2016.

The early morning hours of that hot day in Baghdad were very quiet. I was resting after a month of hard work helping to lead the Fallujah liberation. But that sense of calm vanished with the ringing of my phone several hours before dawn. Once I read the caller's name, I realized that something critical had compelled Staff Maj. Gen. Saad Allaq — Iraq's director of military intelligence — to call me so early.

His words were stern, and I sensed concern in his voice. He informed me that his directorates were tracking significant formations of Daesh in a peninsula in southern Fallujah near Lake Razaza. Approximately 400 vehicles carrying at least 1,200 fighters were on their way to the peninsula from Daesh-controlled areas nearby.

The initial intelligence report raised the possibility that the terrorists intended to move southward to the holy city of Karbala or westward to the Syrian border, and there was a possibility they could even move northward to Mosul. Maj. Gen. Allaq was instructed to go immediately to the headquarters of the joint forces and assist the commander on duty with this situation.

The information was gathered by intercepting a radio signal from Daesh at midnight from this remote location. The first decision by military intelligence was to use airborne reconnaissance. While a Cessna airplane observed and recorded the formation, it received enemy fire and responded by releasing two rockets at the enemy and returning to base.

An Iraqi Air Force AN-32 tactical aircraft arrived, and we confirmed the terrorists' intention as the formation started moving south toward Karbala. To slow the column's movements, the aircraft dropped its load of four bombs on the lead vehicles.

At this point, intelligence reports confirmed that more Daesh elements were moving to the location and their motive was to attack Karbala in retaliation for their defeat in Fallujah. If they could destroy the religious shrines in Karbala, they imagined they could ignite sectarian war in the Middle East and distract the world from focusing on their defeat in Fallujah at the hands of the Iraqi Armed Forces.

Maj. Gen. Allaq and I knew that our Air Force assets were engaged elsewhere and we couldn't fight this significant Daesh formation alone. The speed of the enemy's movement indicated the column would reach Karbala in a few hours.

Even more troubling, Maj. Gen. Allaq contacted governmental and security agencies in Karbala and learned that the forces in the city were not prepared to stop an attack of the magnitude devised by Daesh. At that point, I got more deeply involved.

When I arrived at headquarters and saw the preliminary imaging from the Cessna, I fully grasped the concerns of the head of Iraqi military intelligence. The situation was reaching the critical point. I decided to reach out to our partners in the U.S. forces who work at the same headquarters of the Combined Joint Operations Command and ask for the assistance of reconnaissance assets already operating in the area.

The response of U.S. Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Rick Uribe was very encouraging. It wasn't long before we started getting live feedback from U.S. unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs. We could see the terrain and the size of the Daesh elements and determined the terrorists were preparing to stage an attack. We decided to halt their movements.

Brig. Gen. Uribe contacted his boss, Maj. Gen. Gary Volesky, commander of the 101st Airborne Division, and requested his presence for the developing situation. Gen. Volesky arrived at 4 in the morning, and we briefed him on this dangerous situation. I expressed my concerns that if Daesh reached Karbala, the consequences would be disastrous.

We calculated that about 15 SUVs appeared to be carrying displaced citizens or hostages, and pickup and flatbed trucks were hauling anti-aircraft weapons, fuel, ammunition and supplies.



**Destroyed Daesh vehicles litter the desert southwest of Fallujah, abandoned when Iraqi and coalition airstrikes on June 29, 2016, thwarted an attempt by terrorists to flee Fallujah toward Karbala.** IRAQI COUNTER TERRORISM SERVICE

**IT WAS AN AWESOME MISSION AND A GREAT LESSON  
ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND THE  
CONTINUED COMMITMENT OF OUR U.S. ALLIES TO  
SUPPORT IRAQ IN ITS WAR AGAINST TERROR. I AM  
CERTAIN THAT THIS TRUE PARTNERSHIP WILL PREVAIL.**



Iraqi Soldiers inspect charred Daesh vehicles after Iraqi and coalition airstrikes destroyed an enemy convoy southwest of Fallujah. GETTY IMAGES





They were moving south in convoys. I requested a quick response from our partners, because in a matter of a few hours, Daesh would reach Karbala. There were huge formations in an isolated valley that looked like reinforcements waiting for a call from the advanced elements. The decision was to attack and destroy the leading vehicles.

After multiple calls between Maj. Gen. Volesky and the U.S. Air Force operations center, they managed to reroute drones to the Daesh location. Shortly after, the drones attacked, stopping the convoy. They destroyed about 24 vehicles while we monitored the situation from the live feed. We saw the terrorists flee their vehicles toward a pond. They were retreating like trained soldiers, which indicated they were fighters. Few wore the typical Arabic dishdasha robe; most wore Daesh outfits.

The battle was joined by a squadron of F/A-18s scrambling over the area to continue striking the target. We agreed that coalition airpower would continue the air campaign throughout part of the morning and then hand the mission to the Iraqi Air Force. I felt proud to work with allies who swiftly responded to our request for help and conducted their mission professionally to silence the despicable voices that claim U.S. forces are not serious about fighting Daesh.

In the hours since I had asked for help from our coalition partners, both U.S. generals and their teams remained on their feet monitoring

events and requesting more strikes. I would like to express my gratitude for their commitment and professionalism in completing the mission. I decided to write this story of heroism to ensure the accuracy of the historical record, that these generals did an honorable job of destroying Daesh's plan to attack Karbala, an attack that might have dragged the entire Muslim world into the miseries of sectarian war. The motive of Daesh is clear: to spread sedition and destroy Muslim unity by attacking holy shrines and mosques.

After the accomplishment of the mission, I wrote a letter to the religious authority (*howza*) and to the Sunni Endowment to inform them that all people who believe in tolerance and peaceful co-existence must appreciate the honorable stand of our U.S. partners, especially the Combined Joint Operations Command team that helped me that night.

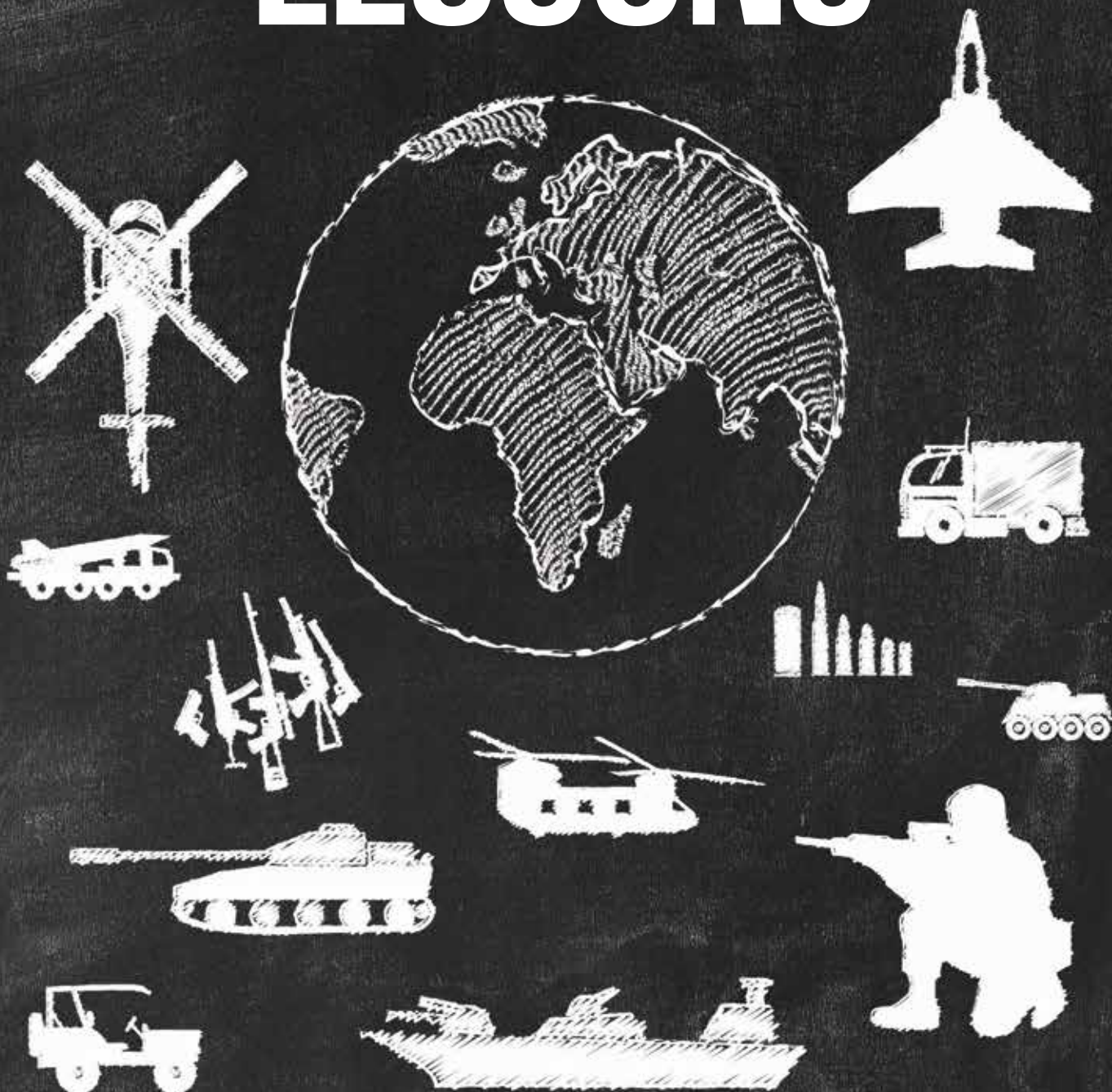
Just as we had agreed, later that morning the Iraqi Air Force took over the mission, although I started my planning hours earlier. Our brave hawks located and destroyed the remains of the enemy forces and at midday deployed with Iraqi Special Operations Soldiers to clear the area and search for valuable information left behind.

It was an awesome mission and a great lesson about the importance of partnerships and the continued commitment of our U.S. allies to support Iraq in its war against terror. I am certain that this true partnership will prevail. ♦

**A Daesh column is destroyed from the air on June 29, 2016, halting Daesh's attempt to convoy forces from Fallujah in the direction of Karbala.**

IRAQI COUNTER  
TERRORISM SERVICE

# LOGISTICAL LESSONS





# Generals will attend the Gulf Cooperation Council Logistics Interoperability Symposium in Doha in December 2016

UNIPATH STAFF

**M**oving thousands of troops and tons of material to Yemen — part of Operation Renewal of Hope in 2015 — represented a massive undertaking by the forces of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Egypt and other Arab coalition partners.

In light of the complexity of mobilizing and equipping modern militaries, the Qatar Defense Forces and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) are co-hosting the Gulf Cooperation Council Logistics Interoperability Symposium on December 6 and 7, 2016.

The conference in Doha, Qatar, is designed for generals and flag officers from the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the United States. Participants will learn the best ways to share information and resources during conflict and how to improve and sustain interoperability.

The symposium will incorporate practical logistics lessons gathered from the coalition's engagement in Yemen. Some of those lessons will shape and enhance logistics planning for Eagle Resolve 17, the multilateral military exercise being held in Kuwait starting in March 2017.

"This symposium will allow all the GCC member nations and the United States to share logistics lessons learned and best practices, which improve our ability to assist each other in times of conflict," said Maj. Gen. Aundre Piggee, U.S. Central Command's director of logistics and engineering.

"The majority of the GCC members are currently involved in regional conflicts that require expeditionary logistics shared resources. We can learn from each other and strengthen strategic partnerships to build on for future engagements."

Operation Renewal of Hope in Yemen has been a land, sea and air campaign to support legitimate governance in Yemen. Saudi Arabia has spearheaded operations with military support from Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The intensity, duration and multinational character of the Yemen operation has added to the logistical complexity.

"CENTCOM is very interested to hear from the GCC nations about their combined logistics efforts

support to operations in Yemen and support for the recent operations in Libya," Gen. Piggee said. "Both of these operations included GCC militaries serving in a combined logistics environment and exercising new expeditionary deployment capabilities."

Gen. Piggee also singled out Qatar's leadership for its continued support of counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"The majority of the GCC members are currently involved in regional conflicts that require expeditionary logistics shared resources. We can learn from each other and strengthen strategic partnerships to build on for future engagements."

— Maj. Gen. Aundre Piggee

"They have been essential to the global effort to eliminate terrorist organizations and build unity amongst regional nations," the general said. "We appreciate our Qatari counterparts agreeing to host our inaugural interoperability symposium and look forward to an exceptional experience for all participants."

A 2015 Camp David Summit set the foundation for establishing the GCC Logistics Interoperability Symposium. A key outcome of the summit was a pledge by leaders to deepen U.S.-GCC relations on these and other issues to build an even stronger, enduring and comprehensive strategic partnership aimed at enhancing regional stability and prosperity. CENTCOM J4 has taken this initiative a step further and developed a logistics forum to bring GCC partners together to discuss and enhance logistics interoperability. ♦

For more information on this conference, please contact  
**CENTCOM.UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL**



**Iraqi troops from the Nineveh Operations Command's Commando Battalion race from a helicopter during training at Camp Taji in January 2016. Iraq's Army Air Wing has played a critical role in defeating Daesh.**





SGT. KALIE JONES/U.S. ARMY

# DEFEATING DAESH FROM THE AIR

HELICOPTERS FROM IRAQ'S ARMY  
AIR WING PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE  
**AGAINST TERRORISM**

UNIPATH STAFF

The Army Air Wing played an essential role in winning battles by destroying the enemy's targets, securing supply routes and handling logistics in difficult terrain. But the campaign against Daesh has elevated its role even further, making these helicopter forces strategic weapons beyond anything envisioned at the war college. This asset has provided the upper hand through precise reconnaissance, identifying camouflaged targets, cutting enemy supply routes and airlifting humanitarian aid to besieged villages. *Unipath* interviewed Staff Gen. Hamid al-Maliki, commander of the Iraqi Army Air Wing, who personally tracks the daily operations of his helicopters and pilots.

Staff Gen. Pilot  
Hamid al-Maliki,  
commander of the  
Iraqi Army Air Wing

IRAQI AIR FORCE





**UNIPATH:** *What is the role of Army Air Wing in the war against Daesh?*

**GEN. HAMID:** First, I would like to mention that the Army Air Wing doctrine is to provide support to ground troops on a conventional battlefield where the front lines are well-defined and the defensive trenches identified on the map. In this scenario, our elements conduct missions to destroy enemy targets on the battlefield. However, there are no doctrines or studies about helicopter tactics in urban warfare. In addition, our forces are fighting an unconventional enemy that has the ability to change tactics rapidly and hide among civilians disguised in ordinary clothes. These terrorists follow no rules of war, disregard the lives of innocents and detonate homes to blame the Iraqi Armed Forces for their crimes. That being

elements on the ground to try to avoid collateral damage among civilians.

**UNIPATH:** *As commander of this strategic force, what is your plan to improve it?*

**GEN. HAMID:** We began building and improving this important force in 2010, when it was established as a separate branch from the Air Force. We had a very modest number of Mi-17 helicopters and Eurocopters. We acquired Bell 407s and plan to buy even more advanced helicopters. We have ambitions to obtain the American gunship helicopter AH-64 Apache. Unfortunately, we ran into obstacles to get this advanced weapon; we almost reached an agreement in 2014, but because of the current global economic situation and the high price of the



Staff Gen. Pilot Hamid al-Maliki, right, and Iraqi Army Staff Gen. Talib Shaghathi Alkenani, commander of the Counter Terrorism Service, conduct an aerial survey of the battlefield in March 2016. IRAQI AIR FORCE

said, the Army Air Wing played a significant and effective role in supporting ground forces throughout the theater. On average, we conduct 70 missions and destroy about 13 targets a day. Like hawks, our forces hover over the battlefield to hunt down terrorists and support the advance of our ground forces. The roar of the helicopter engines over our military positions boosts Soldiers' morale and makes them stronger.

**UNIPATH:** *How many missions have your units completed?*

**GEN. HAMID:** For the year 2015, our force conducted 13,670 missions, including kinetic operations, logistics and humanitarian aid. For the kinetic, we killed about 11,000 terrorists and destroyed 1,450 vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and heavy weapons, in addition to 180 armored vehicles and 80 booby-trapped homes. Our targets are vetted through military intelligence and reconnaissance and confirmed by tribal

Apache, we suspended negotiations. We decided to obtain the Russian fighter helicopters Mi-28 and Mi-35. We also acquired unmanned aerial vehicles that changed the dynamic on the battlefield and extended our reach 250 kilometers. Our goal is to obtain advanced and multiple-origin helicopters with advanced technology such as laser-guided missiles and long ranges to target distant enemy locations and create the ability to fly in all conditions.

**UNIPATH:** *What challenges does the Army Air Wing face?*

**GEN. HAMID:** The first challenge is the budget, and the second is the misunderstanding of the concept of using gunship helicopters by ground forces. We also face the air defense system of the enemy and face difficulties striking Daesh targets so entrenched among civilians. In the name of saving civilians, we avoid many high-value targets. In addition, the undefined and overlapping front lines make the pilot's mission complex — sometime a small village

in the remote desert is controlled partly by our forces and partly by Daesh.

*UNIPATH: What is the difference between the Army Air Wing and the Air Force?*

**GEN. HAMID:** The difference is that the Army Air Wing uses primarily helicopters whereas the Air Force uses fixed-winged fighter jets. The Air Force mission is to destroy the enemy's strategic targets situated far away from the front. It has the capability to reach targets swiftly and efficiently, as the F-16 can fly 1,600 kilometers an hour and destroy targets from an altitude of up to 40,000 feet. However, the F-16 is limited when providing close combat support for entrenched forces with the same effectiveness as helicopters. Helicopters have the ability to hunt down armored vehicles and small targets precisely and efficiently at close range. Helicopters have advanced proficiency to survey the battlefield to detect and destroy enemy assets. Furthermore, the essential capacity of the Air Wing is to move troops and ammunition rapidly to the front lines or besieged areas. The Army Air Wing and the Air Force complete each other and collaborate at all levels.

*UNIPATH: How do you select and train pilots?*

**GEN. HAMID:** We recruit pilots from among talented high school graduates as well as select students from the military college. They must pass the medical and physical examinations, then they enroll in military college to earn a bachelor's degree in military science. Afterward comes the Military Air College, to be trained at the hands of skilled and experienced Iraqi pilots. It is worth noting that our college is considered one of the best in the region. In their first year, they will study basic aviation science. In the second year, they train to fly using light helicopters, before transitioning to midsized craft. During this training, we assess their ability and enroll them in specialized study about specific helicopters, a process that takes two to three years.

*UNIPATH: Are you satisfied with your equipment, or would you like to obtain more advanced technology?*

**GEN. HAMID:** If it were up to me, I would build an Army Air Wing as advanced as that of the United States and other modern nations. What we have achieved thus far doesn't fulfill my ambitions, but is good enough to meet current demand. Our elements are considered a deterrence force in the war against Daesh. You would see military air helicopters hovering over the battlefield during sandstorms, day and night. Sometimes there are large enemy offensives halted by the Army Air Wing alone. We conduct battles against Daesh terrorists, such as two helicopters fighting and defeating a large convoy of Daesh in the desert beyond enemy lines. We have strategic missions on the outskirts of Mosul and sometimes reach to the Syrian border. In terms of my ambitions, I would like to own advanced helicopters like the Apache, Blackhawk and MD. Today, fighting capability is not measured by the engine or body armor of the helicopters but by three important elements: the rockets,

the camera and the target-locking device. These three factors determine the tactical advancement of the helicopter.

*UNIPATH: What can you tell us about dropping humanitarian aid in besieged areas?*

**GEN. HAMID:** This was one of the primary roles for us after the roads were cut due to intensive fighting and many villages fell under control of the terrorists. Therefore, there was no other way to reach remote villages but by helicopter. In many circumstances, our brave pilots conducted dangerous missions by dropping humanitarian aid in areas within range of enemy fire; however, pilots knew how critical it was to save the lives of civilians. I have to send an assault helicopter to escort cargo helicopters so that it can engage the enemy while the cargo is dropped. We conducted many similar missions in Sinjar, Amerly, on the outskirts of Baiji, Amiriyat al-Fallujah, Hadetha and Baghdadi. Without these courageous missions, many civilians would starve.

*UNIPATH: How do you view the international partnership to defeat Daesh?*

**GEN. HAMID:** We began to notice the benefit of the partnership as we worked as a team to divide the workload. We assign targets to the Army Air Wing, the Iraqi Air Force and coalition air power. As a result, this great team was able to destroy approximately 60 percent of enemy assets. The coalition forces equipped with advanced technology played a huge role in finding and destroying strategic targets. We have direct communication with our friends in the U.S. forces through the joint forces command. Our partners are already on the ground, and they are essential in this war to defeat Daesh. Daesh is the enemy not only of Iraq but of all mankind. These terrorists already displayed their aggression against many nations and are spreading across the world, whether as sleeper cells, financiers, recruiters and promoters. The world must team up to fight their activities wherever they exist; otherwise terror won't stop.

*UNIPATH: Do you have any advice for young officers?*

**GEN. HAMID:** I am very proud of our sons, the young officers who bravely fought Daesh and put to the test their faith in defending a unified Iraq. They put their lives at risk every day, whether to airlift essential aid or destroy Daesh targets. Our pilots set an example for the rest of Iraqi military officers by their bravery and dedication. I want them to honor the flag of our nation by rising above sectarianism and treating all Iraqis with respect and dignity. The Iraqi military was founded on the basis of national loyalty, in which all Iraqi factions played an important role in making its military great. We must continue the mission to include all Iraqis. The civilians in the war zone are your people — do whatever it takes to protect them and deliver them essential aid. When your mission is to evacuate civilians from battlefields to safe zones, treat them with respect, make them feel proud of you and comfort them. They are your eyes and ears; without them you can't successfully destroy the enemy's vital resources. I salute you all. You make me — and all Iraqis — proud. ♦





# *The Attack on* **TERROR** **FINANCING**

Destroying Daesh will require destroying  
its means of support

UNIPATH STAFF

**C**oalition members fighting Daesh and other violent extremist organizations in the Middle East and South and Central Asia are waging a multifaceted campaign to starve the terrorists of the financial fuel needed to spread their twisted ideology and wage their savage terror campaigns.

Traditional military strategies incorporating airstrikes and ground battles are augmented with strategies that target the illicit flow of cash to extremists through banking institutions and criminal enterprises.

By all accounts the campaign is working. For proof, look to Daesh, considered the wealthiest violent extremist group ever to wage a terror campaign. It stole in excess of \$1 billion from banks while rampaging across portions of Iraq and Syria, has collected millions from black-market oil sales, and extorted millions more from people living in the territory it occupies. But Daesh is experiencing steep drops in its cash reserves as a result of the coalition's campaign to squeeze its finances.

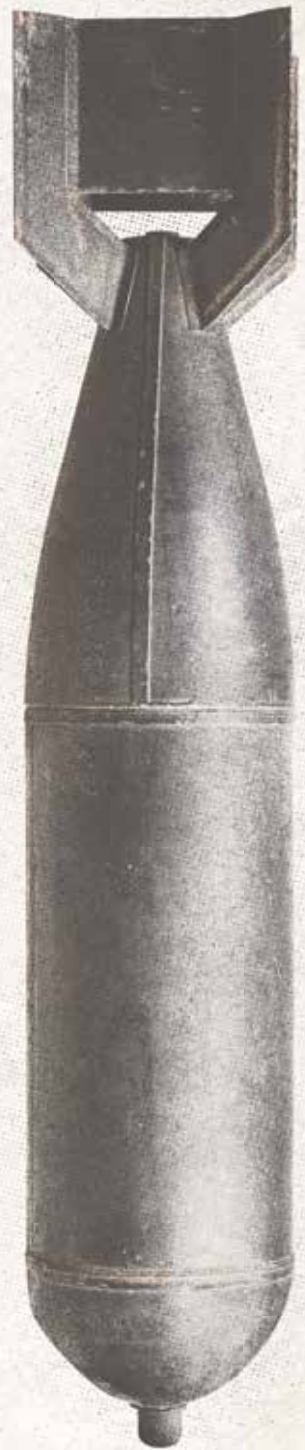
Territory once claimed by Daesh in Iraq and Syria is being retaken by military forces, and with it the oil reserves and population centers where innocent residents are extorted.

Millions in reserves are literally going up in smoke as targeted airstrikes destroy the buildings where Daesh stockpiles its cash.

At the same time, countries engaged in the fight against terror have adopted laws that criminalize the laundering of terror money and facilitate the seizing of assets owned by offenders who support terror. Bank employees are being trained to recognize suspicious transactions.

The cumulative effect has been a reduction in Daesh's ability to function. Its reserves have taken a hit, and its windfall from oil sales have been reduced by as much as a third. Monthly payments to each fighter, estimated by the Rand Corp. at \$100, reportedly have been cut in half, a blow to morale and to the phony aura of invincibility projected in its warped propaganda.

**Coalition airstrikes like this one in Kobani, Syria, are depriving Daesh of cash by destroying oil facilities and tankers. REUTERS**



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
مَدِينَةُ كُوبَانِي  
سُورِيَا



## THE RIGHT TOOLS

While this war on finances has become a focus of late, it is by no means a new strategy. The international Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was created in 1989 to combat money laundering. Twelve years later, after the September 11 terror attacks, FATF members were galvanized to stem the flow of money to violent extremists. Today, the FATF has 37 members, including Gulf Cooperation Council members Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

**Airstrikes are targeting buildings where Daesh keeps millions of dollars in cash it stole from banks and extorted from people forced to live under its control.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The FATF offers 40 recommendations nations can employ to disrupt terrorists accessing the international banking system. In line with that mission, the organization works with nations to enact legislative and regulatory reforms needed to identify and prosecute terror financing operations.

The September 11 attacks also inspired the U.S. Department of Treasury to establish the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program, which enables the U.S. and its allies to locate terror operatives and their financiers, identify terror networks and keep money out of their hands. Several years later, the Treasury Department created the office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence to develop and deploy financial strategies for attacking terror financing. In 2004, recognizing the proliferation of threats to countries in the Middle East and North Africa, an FATF regional body called MENAFATF was created in Bahrain and is

represented by 18 nations that pledged cooperation.

Having these tools in place is essential to pursuing terror financing today. In the past, terrorists were typically financed by rich individuals or states with shared ideologies or common enemies. Al-Qaida under Osama Bin Laden relied on benefactors rather than criminal enterprises to generate terror. Daesh and present-day al-Qaida affiliates collect income through an array of criminal activities, from extortion to illicit drug sales, kidnapping for ransom and the sale of oil and looted antiquities. Phony charities use the Internet to launder contributions.

By June 2014, according to U.S. Treasury Department estimates, Daesh was reaping \$1 million a day from black-market sales of crude and refined oil. But airstrikes beginning in October 2015 have degraded the oil income. The first six months of airstrikes, known as Operation Tidal Wave II, reduced Daesh's oil income by 30 percent, the Rand Corp. reported.

The United Nations also took aim at financing in 2015, banning all trade in antiquities from Syria and threatening sanctions on anyone buying oil from Daesh- and al-Qaida-linked al-Nusrah Front terrorists. It urged states to stop paying kidnapping ransoms.

Individually, nations across the region have increased cooperation. A 2015 FATF report found almost all the nearly 200 nations it studied had criminalized the financing of terrorist acts or terrorist organizations. And nearly 30 had expanded laws to criminalize the financing of travel for the purposes of terrorism or terror training.





## GETTING RESULTS

While some countries are better at adopting the new laws than enforcing them, a number of others are getting results. According to the FATF, Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan are among the top countries for achieving convictions related to terror financing.

The United Arab Emirates, which toughened its terror finance laws in 2014, was praised in a U.S. State Department report when it “openly advocated fighting violent extremism not only militarily, but holistically, including by stopping violent extremist funding.” A regional center for global commerce, the UAE amended its laws to address gaps in the monitoring and prosecution of groups and individuals engaged in fundraising for extremists. “Notably, the amendments codified in law the obligation of all covered entities to report suspicious transactions related to terrorism financing,” the

report noted. The UAE’s 2014 trial of 15 conspirators for supporting the al-Qaida-affiliated al-Nusrah Front and Ahrar al-Sham in Syria resulted in a number of convictions and lengthy prison sentences, *The National* newspaper reported.

In Iraq, airstrikes have destroyed millions in cash Daesh stole from banks, extorted from territories it occupies and otherwise obtained through criminal enterprises that

include the sale of looted antiquities, kidnapping for ransom and heavy taxes.

But Iraq’s success isn’t limited to the airstrikes. Its Financial and Economic Intelligence Department, in cooperation with the Central Bank of Iraq, seized three banking companies in March 2016 that it said were transferring money to Daesh-controlled areas in the provinces of Baghdad and Kirkuk.

Investigators can track the large amounts of money Daesh moves through traditional banks, and transactions made by foreign fighters traveling to Iraq and Syria can also leave a trail. According to The Associated Press, the U.S. Treasury’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) screens roughly 55,000 reports it receives daily from financial institutions for activity involving Daesh. The data allows investigators “to connect the dots between seemingly unrelated individuals and entities,” a FinCEN spokesman said.

Also on the offensive is Kuwait, which created the

Kuwaiti Financial Intelligence Institute in 2013 and established laws that require suspected terror financing be reported and assets immediately frozen. Similarly, Saudi Arabia provides specialized training for bankers, prosecutors, judges, customs officers and others who might come across suspicious financing.

In April 2016, Oman’s elected Shura Council approved amendments to the country’s Anti-Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism Acts that could put violators in prison for 10 years. Mohammad Al Zadjali, head of the legal committee at the Shura Council, said the new law is meant to enhance Oman’s internal security and at the same time give the authorities the ability to arrest offenders quickly. Oman adopted laws in 2002 that detailed the responsibilities of banks and provided for the seizure of assets possessed by offenders. It required banks to train its employees to spot signs of money laundering.

And in Bahrain, Foreign Minister Sheik Khalid bin Ahmed al-Khalifa urged a gathering of world leaders in 2014 to do more to cut the funding for violent extremists and prevent them from profiting from illegal businesses. He urged delegates to “put an end to their ability to smuggle goods and extort funds from commercial enterprises.”

## POWERFUL INCENTIVE

All of these efforts matter. As the Rand Corp. found after studying al-Qaida, there is a direct correlation between money and attacks. Squeezing revenue limits the scope of the criminal acts committed by terrorists.

In fact, many observers believe Daesh is conducting relatively inexpensive European terror attacks so it can project an image of strength at a time when coalition forces have dramatically weakened its financial standing, and in turn its ability to recruit and maintain loyal troops.

An April 2016 report by the consulting firm IHS found that Daesh’s monthly income had dropped from a peak of \$80 million to \$54 million. According to an IHS analyst, “This drop in revenue is a significant figure and will increase the challenge for the group to run its territory in the long term.”

It’s evident that the whole-of-government approach to destroying Daesh is beginning to work. The military gains on the ground are limiting Daesh’s extortion rackets and oil revenues, while the targeted airstrikes on cash reserves and the efforts to crack down on money laundering is cutting into the group’s reserves and cash flow.

To be sure, Daesh still holds sizable reserves and demonstrated in Brussels and Paris that it can reach beyond its borders, even in its weakened state. But results to date offer a powerful incentive for coalition members to continue their pursuit of the illicit money that finances Daesh’s campaign of death and destruction. By destroying the reserves, identifying the players behind illicit financial transactions and imposing tough penalties on those assisting terror enterprises, coalition forces can hasten the defeat of Daesh. ♦

**Airborne warning and control systems are helping direct airstrikes in Syria and Iraq.**

SENIOR AIRMAN MATTHEW BRUCH/U.S. AIR FORCE




# ENDING —THE— MIRAGE

*A UNITED ARAB EMIRATES SCHOLAR  
OUTLINES A CASE FOR REDUCING  
RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM*

**DR. JAMAL SANAD AL-SUWAIDI**  
EMIRATES CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES AND RESEARCH





**T**he struggle against extremist groups and organizations such as Daesh is not limited to military and security operations. It is also an extended war of an essentially intellectual nature that requires long-term planning. This is no less important — indeed, perhaps even more so — than planning in military and security terms. Academic scholarship plays a vital role in protecting the security of nations and societies.

In my recently published book, *The Mirage*, I argue that the Muslim world needs an intellectual revival that includes separating politics from extremist religious messages as a prerequisite for the achievement of real progress. This relationship between religion and politics is a pertinent issue having a notable impact on the current regional environment in the Arab and Islamic worlds — which incidentally prevents many Arab and Islamic societies from keeping up with the march of modernity, progress and development.

By this I don't mean removing religion from daily life. Nothing could be further from my mind. But there is a shared belief among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states that reform is necessary and closely connected to domestic and regional security and stability. These countries, as well as Jordan, have moved to increase social interaction by listening to and acknowledging citizens' concerns, often via social media, and subsequently addressing them.

Countering intolerant and regressive ideas of religious political groups requires a multidimensional approach. Cultural and intellectual arguments are as equally important as military intervention. We need to uproot these destructive ideas, thereby limiting the ability of those who seek to manipulate the minds of the youth or exploit difficult economic and social circumstances in certain communities that otherwise can be targeted as a breeding ground.

*We must strengthen cooperation between religious institutions in GCC countries and religious institutions in the Arab and Islamic worlds, especially those institutions whose influence extends across the region and more broadly across the international community, such as Al-Azhar University in Egypt.*



**Al-Azhar University, Egypt**  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



We must promote a culture of moderation in all Gulf, Arab and Islamic communities and bolster efforts to confront those destructive ideologies that contradict both humanity and the tolerant principles of Islam.

This also means strengthening cooperation between religious institutions in GCC countries and religious institutions in the Arab and Islamic worlds, especially those institutions whose influence extends across the region and more broadly across the international community, such as Al-Azhar University in Egypt.

The objective is not only to confront these destructive ideologies, but to unmask the real objectives of those propagating such ideologies, their inherent corruption, thereby revealing their true nature, namely the practice or justification of violence concealed and camouflaged under the veil of religion.

Another issue is finance and recruitment of extremists, and here the problem goes beyond the Middle East. Non-Arab states must do more to stop money from going to terrorists and improve surveillance of recruiters operating in foreign countries. It's surprising to me that Daesh, despite operating so far away in Syria and northern Iraq, has successfully recruited Muslims living in Europe. It is almost inexplicable that these groups should be able to find in many European countries a fertile environment that enables them to disseminate their ideas.

Therefore, these areas must be targeted and countered, and as such, it is essential for the European and American governments to cooperate with the counterpropaganda efforts made by the GCC countries. These young Muslims should be informed and educated about the danger posed by the group and its destructive views, which, in fact, contradict the principles of Islam and true Islamic values.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) seeks to spread the culture of genuine Islam, augmenting efforts to counter extreme ideologies that undermine human values and the tolerant principles of Islam, with the purpose of finding solutions for the issues facing Muslims all over the world.

Daesh rationalizes its violence and horror by appealing to glory. When it comes to extremism, the myth of the moral righteousness of wanton bloodshed can and must be punctured. The greatest crime in Islam is the taking of innocent lives. The Quran also makes suicide an instant disqualifier for heaven. Furthermore, Islam calls on its faithful to be the best Muslims they can be, and this includes promoting educational and social advancement.

Extremism, with its destruction of human lives and important societal institutions, directly contradicts these edicts. First, in the extremists' vision of the caliphate, women are actually subordinate to men. Even more egregious is the extremists' hijacking of the concept of "community building" — as nefarious a euphemism as could be — because in practice it involves rape and forcible child bearing.

Decisions to join Daesh are highly personal, and must be countered by highly personal campaigns; the extremists' narrative must be challenged at a grassroots level though social media campaigns juxtaposing extremists' repressive

behavior toward women with the promise of a university degree, for example.

Successful examples can also be found in UAE public awareness campaigns, which have been conducted by religious authorities to expose the lies and dangers of violent extremism. A culture of political moderation has taken hold that engages our youth at a young age and provides them outlets for expression as they mature. The UAE also recently launched a new media initiative, called Sawab, to counter the propaganda of radical religious extremists across the region.

When it comes to punishment, I disagree with calls to implement the death penalty for those caught joining a terrorist cause. A better choice is rehabilitation for those who have not yet committed murder or other serious crimes.

We should educate all other segments of society about the merciful principles of Islam and explain to them that Islam prohibits violence and emphasizes the need to spread the values of peace, tolerance and acceptance.

Lack of education and economic development play a contributing role in fomenting extremism. One of the problems faced by these countries is the declining level of education that leaves segments of society vulnerable to destructive ideologies propagated by political and religious groups. In relatively poorer countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Sudan, extremism has flourished among the poorly educated who are unaware of the consequences of their beliefs.

Pakistan and Afghanistan should encourage institutions to establish branches of prestigious Islamic universities or religious institutions and task them with confronting extremist ideologies, as well as encouraging them to disseminate more moderate and more tolerant values.

In addition, development assistance will also be required. There is no doubt that troubled economic conditions in these countries are fueling the rise in extremism and terrorism; it is well-known that these terrorist groups look to exploit these conditions in their recruitment of vulnerable young people.

Therefore, one of the main objectives of the development assistance provided by the GCC to these countries is to help them overcome these fraught economic conditions that facilitate the spread of extremism. This includes improving their education systems and creating job opportunities for vulnerable young people.

Overall, the antidote to the extremists' mirage is reality. There is a vivid and terrifying reality of facts that can confront and defeat their lies. And there is a reality of hope and opportunity that must be created for young people to have a stake in tolerance and peace. ♦

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Jamal Sanad Al-Suwaidi is director general of the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research and political advisor to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi and deputy supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces.

The background is a teal color with a faint world map. Binary code (0s and 1s) is scattered across the background, particularly at the top and bottom edges.

# SAFEGUARDING CYBERSPACE

CONFERENCE DRAWS EXPERTS FROM  
THE MIDDLE EAST, CENTRAL ASIA  
AND THE UNITED STATES

UNIPATH STAFF

ISTOCK



There are many ways to cripple or shut down cyber networks. An action as simple as an employee opening a tainted email can cause real-world damage to critical infrastructure.

That is why a comprehensive approach to cyber security is critical to national security. Power grids, water plants, hospitals, telecommunications systems, oil refineries and other major components of modern society must focus on current and potential threats from cyberspace.

The threat of such disastrous computer attacks is a major reason officials such as Staff Maj. Gen. Abdullah Al-Zahrani, director of communications and information technology for Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Defense, attended the U.S. Central Command's sixth Central Region Communications Conference (CRCC) in Washington, D.C., in April 2016. Fellow professionals from the Middle East and Central Asia shared strategies for dealing with online threats from criminals, terrorists and hostile governments.

"Cyber attacks represent one of the fastest-growing threats faced by the region and the security of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Ministry of Defense gives absolute priority to keep up with technology, command and control systems, and cyber security, especially after the problems and cyber intrusions on the Arabian Oil Company," Maj. Gen. Al-Zahrani said.

"The Saudi Ministry of Defense is involved with all state agencies in the coordination, planning and strategies on cyber security and protection of critical infrastructure information, and we have made significant progress in the field of electronic government."

This year's CRCC brought together participants from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Co-hosting the event with U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) were the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Federal Communications Commission.

For three days, the conference helped build relationships and dialogue among information and communications technology leaders on the topic of improving cyber security — especially regarding critical infrastructure protection.

"There are no shortages of challenges in this arena," said Maj. Gen. Kenneth Wilsbach, former acting deputy commander of CENTCOM.

What makes the event so unique is the opportunity for military, academic, government and industry experts to gain new perspectives on each other's sectors and roles in national security. Brig. Gen. Peter Gallagher, CENTCOM's then director of Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems, and chief information officer, has participated in four previous CRCCs and expressed pride in the robust dialogue and frank discussions about agencies and organizations accepting greater responsibility for cyber protection.

"CRCC is a platform to focus on priorities," Brig. Gen. Gallagher explained. "We must be motivated and inspired to set the conditions for our own success."

During this year's CRCC, participants were given the *United States Central Command Cybersecurity Handbook for Partner Nations*. The handbook



JOHN BRISCOE JR./NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY



**Participants from 12 countries took part in this year's Central Region Communications Conference.**

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provides an overview of the cyber security standards and processes for partner nations to receive, store, process, display or disseminate applicable U.S. classified military information.

Such sharing was appreciated by Maj. Gen. Al-Zahrani, who explained that Saudi Arabia and the United States cooperate in technical consulting, protecting systems, strategic capabilities and physical protection. In addition, Saudi Arabia is a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations agency specializing in the field of information and communications technology.

"Since the exacerbation of cyberspace threats and problems, the kingdom demanded international legislation to protect cyber systems, and we aspire to be a key player in the ITU, protect infrastructure from cyber attacks, [and] prevent and address cyber attacks through international cooperation to counter cyber threats," the general said.

Jordanian Brig. Gen. Ahmad Milhim attended CRCC for the first time, and he praised the sessions as "invaluable." He is director of information security for the Jordan Armed Forces, and over the past few years his country has focused on increasing cyber security.

Recognizing the borderless nature of the internet, Brig. Gen. Milhim expressed support for a regional system to share cyber threats and build mutual resiliency against intrusions. "There is one cyberspace — not just a cyberspace for Jordan," he said.

One mechanism for this type of information sharing is computer emergency readiness or response teams known as CERTs, explained Dr.

Sherif Hashem, vice president for cyber security of Egypt's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA).

Egypt's CERT, known as EG-CERT, was established in 2009 as part of NTRA and is charged with providing computer and information security incident response, support, defense and analysis against cyber attacks. Collaboration with government, financial entities and other critical information infrastructure sectors is key to the mission, Dr. Hashem explained. The organization provides a vital early warning system against malware spreading throughout systems and warns of attacks to critical information infrastructure.

"International cooperation is key to overcoming cyber security threats," Dr. Hashem said, explaining that Egypt participates in regional and international cyber drills to ensure that the country's experts recognize evolving threats and harden systems against attack.

Like Egypt, Oman also has a CERT team. According to the 2015 Global Cybersecurity Index, Oman ranked third in the world for countries best prepared for cyber attacks. The country is also a pioneer in offering e-government services to its citizens.

"The Oman Computer Emergency Readiness Team [OCERT] was officially launched in April 2010 under the umbrella of the Information Technology Authority to seek a secured cyber environment for Omani users whether they are a public or private institution," said Fahad Abdulaziz Al Saiyabi of Oman's Coordination and Communication Agency. "OCERT is one of the

Continued on page 37



# THE WAY TO A SECURE COMMUNICATIONS FUTURE

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While in Washington, D.C., for the 2016 U.S. Central Command Central Region Communications Conference, officials from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait and Qatar participated in a round-table discussion with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Tom Wheeler and senior FCC staff. Despite the diversity of activities and development in each nation, all participants agreed that providing affordable and reliable communications technologies in their respective countries was a common priority.

Wheeler welcomed the group with an overview of the FCC's goals and challenges and noted that for many consumers, broadband has surpassed standard telephone services in terms of importance. Wheeler said that to keep pace with this evolution, the FCC's Lifeline program, established in 1985 to make telephone service affordable for low-income Americans, has been modernized to enable subscribers to purchase discounted broadband services.

Wheeler noted the benefits of encouraging openness and competition in the communications sector, illustrated by the "virtuous circle" created if the internet is kept free of unnecessary restrictions. Internet openness spurs investment and development by application and content providers, which leads to increased consumer demand for broadband access, which leads to increased investment in broadband network infrastructure and technologies, which in turn leads to further innovation and development by apps and content providers.

The virtuous circle has been successful in fueling investment in infrastructure, new communications services, and consumer apps. The United States witnessed a 35 percent increase in venture capital, internet-related investment over the past year. Wheeler expects this to result in significant growth in the quality, as well as range, of innovative services available to consumers.

Retired Rear Adm. David Simpson, chief of the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, discussed the future of the communications sector in the U.S. and abroad, focusing on the interplay between security, privacy and

innovation. Adm. Simpson noted that as we move forward with new technological capabilities, it is critical to address accompanying security and privacy concerns, especially from the consumer perspective. He said that governments alone cannot safeguard cyber security; it is imperative that all stakeholders work together toward this goal.

To that end, private-sector companies can and should facilitate security-related technological advances while also protecting their customers' interests. If consumers feel their privacy has been jeopardized through their use of technology, he added, there may be less technology adopted — and that could ultimately slow innovation.

Adm. Simpson noted that the future 5G technology will be a game changer in the U.S. and around the world. This new technology will support an internet of things that will facilitate an unprecedented level of interconnectivity, with an increasing number of everyday devices connected to the internet and each other. Adm. Simpson stressed both the opportunity and responsibility presented by the introduction of 5G: It will be the first commercial wireless network in which stakeholders consider and plan for cyber security at its inception.

Throughout the round-table discussion, the regulators exchanged contact information and made plans for further discussion on issues of mutual interest. FCC representatives said they were honored to host the round-table and look forward to deepening and strengthening their work with communications leaders from the Middle East and around the world. Mindel De La Torre, chief of the FCC's International Bureau, noted the benefits of continued dialogue between the FCC and the telecommunications regulators from the Middle East region.

She stressed the importance of exchanging views and experiences on such issues of global impact as 5G mobile services, broadband deployment and accessible technologies. De La Torre expressed the hope that the round-table would be the first of many discussions on issues of mutual interest to the FCC and regulators in the Middle East.



# COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: KUWAIT STEPS UP CYBER DEFENSE

**SALIM ALOZAINAH**, ENGINEER/CHAIRMAN AND CEO OF KUWAIT'S COMMUNICATION  
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REGULATORY AUTHORITY

As cyber warfare becomes a major threat to critical national infrastructure and the economy, Kuwait's Communication Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) is stepping up its defense by establishing the National Cybersecurity Committee, led by CITRA and responsible for governing large investments to establish a National Cybersecurity Center (NCC) which includes:

1. National computer emergency readiness or response team (CERT)
2. Incident response
3. Human capacity building
4. Becoming a resilient state in protecting the following sectors from cyber attacks: international internet gateway, national fixed networks, energy, utilities, financial telecom and government agencies

Kuwait realizes that its critical infrastructure, such as the energy sector, a main economic driver, is under constant threat of attack. This reality necessitates the effective deployment of advanced technology and a well-trained, highly skilled NCC workforce.

CITRA is working closely with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to ensure compatibility with its strategic allies and the implementation of best practices that will lead to a Kuwait that is better protected against cyber attacks. These strategic partnerships will also be instrumental in establishing the consistent coordination and cross-group collaboration necessary to contribute to a much safer region in the face of ever-increasing cyber threats.

Additionally, CITRA is preparing to sign several cyber security corporation agreements

with top international universities and major technology players. These cooperative efforts will cultivate greater coordination with leading technology providers to enhance Kuwait's national cyber-security resiliency.

These fundamental efforts represent the beginning of Kuwait's commitment to building its cyber defenses as we continue to face the threats associated with the ongoing, unending cyber war.

In addition to the aforementioned cyber defense initiatives, CITRA Kuwait is also leading the following national cyber security efforts:

- Establishing the National Cybersecurity Committee
- Defining critical infrastructure
- Aligning with strategic allies
- Implementing cyber-security standards and policies
- Investment in human capacity
- Assembling a state-of-the-art National Cybersecurity Center

CITRA Kuwait's adaptive approach is focused not only on the present but the future. Innovations in the world of technology are occurring rapidly on multiple fronts, such as mobility, new devices and cloud computing. The Kuwait NCC will be ready to accommodate these technological changes while remaining vigilant to effectively defend against emerging threats.

In conclusion, effective cyber security initiatives require support from senior leadership. Kuwait's recent cyber security successes are a direct result of Kuwait's senior political leaders' support, coupled with the support from Kuwait's strategic allies, such as U.S. DOD and DHS and GCC countries.





Continued from page 34

eOman initiatives and considered to be the focal point for security incidents in the Sultanate.”

Cyber resilience was a topic throughout the conference as military, government and academic experts spoke about cyber security challenges.

Professionals from Microsoft, Dell, Cisco and Carnegie Mellon and Harvard universities discussed topics such as cloud technology, critical infrastructure protection and increasing the resiliency of systems after an attack. All agreed on one point: Cyber attacks are inevitable.

“Complexity is an adversary’s most effective weapon in the 21st century,” said Dr. Ronald Ross of the National Institute of Standards and Technology in the U.S.

Reducing the complexity of systems, developing a comprehensive risk management plan, fortifying systems against attack and increasing awareness of basic cyber security guidelines can have substantial benefits. “We all win when each one of us gets a little bit stronger,” Dr. Ross said.

Brig. Gen. Mubarak Saeed Al-Jaberi of the United Arab Emirates said his country’s top leaders are keen supporters of cyber security, which is why the UAE has taken a leading role in addressing cyber security issues, strategy, information, standards, regulations and laws.

“The UAE’s NESA [National Electronic Security Authority] introduced a national cyber information framework, and NESA is committed

to protecting the UAE’s infrastructure from all cyber threats, utilizing the latest innovative technologies and setting cyber security strategies and policies,” Brig. Gen. Al-Jaberi said.

Like Brig. Gen. Milhim in Jordan, Brig. Gen. Al-Jaberi supported a global approach to curtailing threats. “Last year, we talked about building and creating an international task force, because information security is a joint responsibility,” he said.

Khalid N. Sadiq Al-Hashimi, an engineer who serves as undersecretary for cyber security and director of Qatar’s CERT in the Ministry of Transport and Communication, is a veteran of every CRCC since 2012. This year he focused his presentation on risk management and the importance of organizations taking responsibility for their own cyber security.

“Every year I see new colleagues, I see improvement, I see progress,” he said. “I see new ideas and new initiatives coming from the nations that participate in CRCC.”

As the conference ended, Brig. Gen. Gallagher voiced support for developing a mechanism for tracking the cyber security progress and achievements of other countries and connecting with partner countries more frequently than just during the annual conference. This can be done inexpensively using webinars. ♦

**Dr. Sherif Hashem, vice president for cyber security of Egypt's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, gives an overview of Egypt's achievements.**

UNIPATH STAFF



# STREN





# GTH

*in Unity*

## **EGYPTIAN CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GEN. MAHMOUD HEGAZY DISCUSSES JOINT SECURITY AND THE TERRORISM THREAT**

**Staff Lt. Col. Yousef Al Hadad**  
*Nation Shield* magazine/United Arab Emirates

*Nation Shield* magazine of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) sat down with Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Hegazy, chief of staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces, to discuss pressing security matters in the Middle East:

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**NATION SHIELD:** What do you think about the UAE leadership's view of the current challenges in the Arab region and how they have dealt with them?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** The United Arab Emirates has conscientious leadership that has recognized the challenges of the current phase as being a major threat to the Arab region. The UAE leaders' reading of the security scene in the Arab homeland was accurate, systematic and thoughtful. Their initiatives to support Arab brethren in all countries, especially Egypt, deepen ties and promote Arab relations. They are fully aware of the importance of joint Arab cooperation in general, and Egyptian-UAE cooperation in particular. As long as there are leaders on this level of maturity and wisdom in the UAE, Egypt will make sure that the future will be better and will paint a bright future for the sister countries, the Emirates and Egypt.

**NATION SHIELD:** What is your advice to the Arab community regarding the next stage?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** Everyone should realize that all countries in the Arab region are targeted by powers that are working in secret on schemes aimed at destabilizing security and stability in the region. Therefore, in light of these

challenges, I think the best advice for all of us is to build a variety of relationships — military, economic, human and societal — to consolidate ties and solidarity, which has become an urgent need for all nations.

**NATION SHIELD:** The UAE and Egypt have developed historic relations, embodied in solid cooperation in various areas. How do you see these relations from the military side?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** Indeed, relations are strong and established between the two countries, and will remain powerful and entrenched, God willing. The military aspect is witnessing a serious and fruitful cooperation according to a systematic plan that includes joint exercises between the UAE and Egyptian forces. This will be demonstrated in the future through joint exercises in operations Arrows of Righteousness 1, Arrows of Righteousness 2, and Arrows of Righteousness 3. There are also joint exercises between the armed forces. I firmly believe there is coexistence, fellowship and deep intellectual harmony, which underlines the depth and the growth of military relations between the two countries.

**NATION SHIELD:** What about the military cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and other Arab countries?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** We rely on a policy of opening up military exercises to share experiences and deepen ties with the Gulf states and other Arab countries, especially in light of the threats and ambitions witnessed by the Arab region and the desperate attempts to destabilize its security and stability. This depends at the same time on a thorough and deep understanding of the big challenges facing the Arab world, as well as our belief in the importance of joint Arab cooperation to face all challenges of the future. Therefore, we are cooperating with Arab countries, including the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, in the field of training, and the doors are open for cooperation and an exchange of experience and training with all the Arab Gulf states to maintain our security against external threats. Operation Al-Hazem Storm is a necessity that has been dictated by reality and the protection of the nation.

**NATION SHIELD:** What are your thoughts on Operation Al-Hazem Storm?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** I think the security conditions and the protection of the homeland and its border have emphasized the inevitability and need for Operation Al-Hazem Storm. A good observer recognizes that there are regional powers and foreign elements that have no objection to exploiting internal elements in any Arab country to undermine the domestic security of that state, which may affect the internal security of neighboring countries or Arab countries in general. In Yemen, an armed group adopted a plan beyond the legitimacy of the state and tried to impose its control over the country illegally along ethnic and sectarian lines, with the support of external forces,



Egyptian Lt. Gen. Mahmoud Hegazy attends a counterterrorism planning session in the United States with fellow regional chiefs of staff. REUTERS



to break up the security and stability of Yemen and threaten neighboring countries. This group spread quickly and was about to fully undermine the security of the state and disrupt the security of neighboring countries and of Arab countries in general. This situation called for Operation Al-Hazem Storm to resolve those schemes that threaten all Arabs.

**NATION SHIELD:** Do you think Operation Al-Hazem Storm has achieved its objectives?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** I think that it has. At least this group has not been able to achieve full control of Yemen; rather, they began to retreat and pulled out of the sites that had been under their control before the “storm.” Moreover, they returned to the language of dialogue that they had refused to use prior to the operation. Consequently, there have been opportunities for dialogue and discussions to find a political solution to the crisis. This reflects an important fact, namely that Operation Al-Hazem Storm was never focused on bloodshed or killing and destruction, but at achieving strategic goals that protect Yemen and neighboring countries, as well as other Arab countries. We hope that solutions will be political, and that Operation Hope Storm will help rebuild Yemen on real democratic foundations that respect neighboring countries, guarantee freedom of opinion and do not allow the formation or existence of such groups.

**NATION SHIELD:** There is a new orientation in the Egyptian armament process. Will you tell us about this trend and its importance?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** This talk is true. It represents a diversification of the sources of armament, which is an urgent requirement for Egyptian national security, dictated by inevitable necessities and the strategies of building the appropriate weapons systems to defend the country. The inclination to diversify the sources of arms does not necessarily mean we deal with one country at the expense of another. The development of a general strategy to build the Armed Forces takes place according to the requirements of the country’s national security. It is also difficult to rely on one source of weapons; because if that source goes away, you will face a severe crisis that may threaten your security and stability; therefore, reliance on diverse sources serves the national security of the state.

**NATION SHIELD:** What about the security of Sinai?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** Sinai is a valuable part of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Most of Egypt’s wars were fought for the protection of the Sinai and its security, for it affects our strategic eastern border. It has been central to the Egyptian Armed Forces since the dawn of history. What happened, with all transparency and clarity, was that Sinai was neglected in terms of development. In the wake of the January 25 revolution in

2011, the prisons were opened and more than 25,000 prisoners released. Some police stations were attacked and more than 15,000 pieces of weaponry were taken. At the same time, the police were depleted, so the criminals went to Sinai. They lived there for a period, displaying weapons and threatening the security of citizens. The crisis increased and increased and became more dangerous during the reign of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. This helped create a suitable environment for this group to realize its desires, which are based on an extremist ideology that is being employed against the interests of the state, its legitimacy and development. This has forced the Armed Forces to move to protect this precious spot of Egyptian territory.

**NATION SHIELD:** How do you see the current situation in Sinai at all levels?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** The situation is fully under control. The Armed Forces are delivering successive and painful blows to the places where terrorism exists. Nevertheless, the most dangerous thing in terrorism is that the individuals who live among us could turn into terrorists. Unfortunately, the war against terrorism will continue for a while until it is eliminated altogether. This is due to two reasons: The first is that we have the will and determination not to rest until we eradicate these extremist terrorist outposts in Egypt. The second is that we have the required ability and capability in our Armed Forces, the Ministry of the Interior and the people of the Sinai. The Sinai’s indigenous Bedouins are patriotic people who love their country and have a history of honorable struggle for their country. Besides, the noble people of Sinai reject these terrorist practices. The most dangerous thing about this extremism and terrorism is that it uses the name of religion to lie and falsify facts and mislead citizens. They aim to achieve repugnant goals that threaten our security and stability. Religion is innocent of such practices, and we are able to root out this terrorism.

**NATION SHIELD:** Finally, what is your assessment of and vision for security in the Arab region?

**LT. GEN. HEGAZY:** This question is very important, so I should answer it with full transparency. There are threats and dirty schemes led by hidden hands to destabilize the security and stability of the people of the Arab region to achieve ambitions that were planned a long time ago. Therefore, there is no other way for us but to unite and address those foreign ambitions and aggressions forcefully and decisively. No one could imagine the events and crises that happened lately throughout our Arab countries. Our countries should be on the alert and cooperate with one another. I can only pray to God to preserve Egypt, the UAE and all Arab countries. ♦



لا إله إلا الله

رسول الله  
محمد

# *Stemming the Flow of* **FOREIGN FIGHTERS**

*Coalition nations take a multifaceted approach to defeating Daesh* UNIPATH STAFF

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**T**he flow of foreign fighters into conflict zones continues to be a major concern among coalition forces fighting Daesh and other violent extremist organizations in the Middle East, North Africa and Central and South Asia.

Daesh in particular has succeeded in drawing fighters to its ranks in Iraq and Syria, and more recently in Libya as well. Coalition forces have had some recent success in stemming the flow, most notably across the Turkish border.

But the phenomenon of foreign recruits leaving their homes to join barbarous groups in far-away lands is a complex one that defies easy answers. While the majority are young males, and a certain percentage come from troubled backgrounds with limited prospects for a better life, there is no common profile of a foreign fighter.

Likewise, there is no common motivating factor in deciding to join. Many are susceptible to the corrupted religious messages spewed by Daesh and other terror organizations, while others are simply seeking adventure, a paycheck, or an escape from their home countries.

Their first step down the terror path often starts with exposure to the sort of slick social media propaganda that sets Daesh apart from its predecessors. The influence of relatives connected to terror groups and living in Western cities can complete the transformation.

Countering the online propaganda, boosting border enforcement, stiffening criminal penalties for enabling terrorists, and participating in a more robust sharing of information are strategies that coalition nations are pursuing to turn back foreign fighters at the border or, more important, to keep them from seeking to join terror groups in the first place.

In Tunisia, the source of more foreign fighters than any other country, new laws are keeping recruits from leaving the country. Saudi Arabia has arrested hundreds of suspected Daesh members and instituted a program to reintegrate them into society. Across Europe, police are identifying recruiting networks and making arrests.

Without question, coalition victories on the battlefield are critical to disrupting the recruitment of foreign fighters. But equally important is winning the hearts and minds of Muslims who are exposed to the deceptions of Daesh and other terror groups.

## *Who they are*

In fact, Daesh's ascent was based in large part on the phony narrative that it would create a self-proclaimed "caliphate" across areas of Syria and Iraq where followers could practice a purer form of Islam.

By the time Daesh began occupying cities in Syria and Iraq, thousands of disaffected youth had answered the call to join its ranks. Unlike calls from previous terror organizations offering martyrdom, Daesh pretends to offer a haven where people can live as devout Muslims.

"Many of these individuals, it would seem, are buying into that message and are going into there to live, not die," Brian Dodwell, deputy director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, told NBC News in April 2016.

The television network had obtained digital records revealing the backgrounds of 4,000 Daesh recruits. At about the same time, a Syrian news organization and a British TV station also obtained records providing a wealth of personal information about foreign recruits, including motivations for joining.



As Dodwell told NBC, “The largest takeaway from these documents is the massive diversity of the population.” Though the average age was about 26, they ranged from teenagers to men in their 60s. Schooling ranged from no formal education to master’s degrees.

Because recruitment spiked as Daesh occupied territory in Iraq and Syria in 2014, it appears a desire to live in the so-called caliphate was a major motivator.

Exactly how many fighters Daesh has — whether foreign-born or recruited within Iraq and Syria — is uncertain. Estimates from U.S. government agencies and from independent groups range from tens of thousands to as many as 200,000. Experts believe Daesh has surpassed other terror groups in attracting foreign fighters to its ranks.

During the 10 years the Soviets fought in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the total number of foreign fighters was estimated at between 20,000 and 35,000. In December 2015, The Soufan Group, an international consulting firm, put the number of foreign fighters who have traveled to

for past acts,” the report said. “A search for belonging, purpose, adventure, and friendship appear to remain the main reasons for people to join.”

Of concern to countries in Europe and North America, the firm found up to 30 percent of the recruits had returned to Western countries after being radicalized, representing a serious challenge to security in those countries.

## Countermeasures

Coalition nations are well aware of the danger. As a result of the growing threat, about 45 countries have enacted laws or amendments to impede travel into Iraq and Syria, according to the Center for American Progress, an independent policy institute.

A March 2016 report by the institute said 35 countries have arrested suspected foreign fighters, and 12 of those countries have successfully prosecuted them. It found information sharing has improved, with more than 50 countries using Interpol’s Counter-Terrorism Fusion Centre to share fighter profiles, a substantial increase from a few years ago. And it noted the United States shares information on terrorist travel with 40 countries.

On the fiscal front, a 2015 report by the international Financial Action Task Force urged its members to identify financial red flags indicating someone is aiding terror organizations and to freeze bank accounts and debit cards used by fighters to travel across borders. The United Nations Security Council passed a resolution requiring member nations to criminalize the financing of travel by foreign fighters.

Militarily, airstrikes are eliminating some of the leading foreign fighters, including Omar al-Shishani, a Chechen who joined Daesh and became its “minister of

war.” He was reportedly killed in an airstrike near Mosul in Iraq. And many countries are involved in vigorous cyber campaigns that are disrupting Daesh’s ability to recruit foreign fighters, conduct terror campaigns and even pay its fighters.

But challenges remain, particularly along the 500-mile border Turkey shares with Syria.

As the Center for American Progress reports, Turkey is the main artery for foreign fighters traveling to Syria. “Plugging the holes in Turkey’s porous border will be critical to stopping foreign fighters of all nationalities from crossing into Syria,” the report said. There are encouraging signs, though. Suspected foreign fighters are being arrested at the border, and some reports indicate the foreign fighter flow is lessening. But the sheer length of the border makes it impossible to disrupt the crossings entirely.



**An airstrike reportedly killed Omar al-Shishani, a Chechen who joined Daesh and became its so-called minister of war.** THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iraq and Syria over just a few years at roughly 30,000, migrating from 86 countries. U.S. intelligence agencies in January 2016 put the number at over 36,000 originating from more than 100 countries.

Countries in northwest Africa have accounted for about 8,000 of the fighters, with Tunisia providing the majority, the Soufan report found. Countries in the Middle East accounted for another 8,000, while Western Europe and the former Soviet republics each accounted for nearly 5,000 fighters.

The decision to join, according to the report, is more personal than political. “Although much of the propaganda put out by the Islamic State focuses on the civilian casualties arising from the military campaign waged against it, the majority of its video production appeals to those who seek a new beginning rather than revenge



Coalition nations are sharing information and toughening laws that target people who recruit foreign fighters. Spanish authorities made this arrest in February 2015 in Melilla, the Spanish enclave neighboring Morocco.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES





**The Turkish border is a major artery for foreign fighters, but recent efforts have helped stem the flow. Here, Turkish Soldiers stand guard in Karkamis, near the border with Syria.** REUTERS

By far, Tunisia supplies more foreign fighters than any other single nation. As many as 6,000 Tunisians have joined Daesh and other terror groups in Iraq and Syria. A United Nations human rights group was told of

sophisticated travel networks that guide recruits across porous borders. “The routes taken entail travel through Libya, then Turkey and its border at Antakya, and then Syria,” according to human rights expert Elzbieta Karska, who headed the U.N. group.

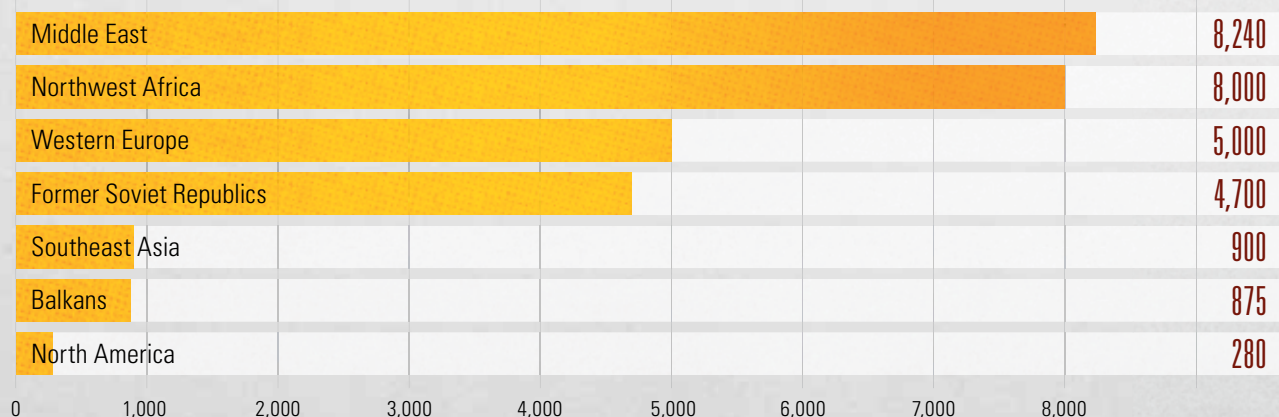
From 2011 to 2014, the Tunisian government seemed to tolerate the flow. But by 2015, the American Center for Progress found, “a set of counterterrorism measures was instituted after [Daesh] claimed credit for a mass shooting at a tourist resort. These measures included travel restrictions on Tunisians under age 35 to a number of countries, including Syria.” The government claims the restrictions blocked thousands of Tunisians from traveling to join terror groups. In August 2015, new counterterrorism laws criminalized enrollment in terrorist organizations, and expanded powers of surveillance against suspected terrorists and their recruits.

Second to Tunisia as a source of foreign fighters is Saudi Arabia, with an estimated 2,500. In response, Saudi Arabia has toughened its criminal sanctions and adopted innovative policies. Saudis joining conflicts outside the kingdom face long prison sentences or even death. Hundreds of suspected Daesh members have been arrested, and over 800 convictions secured for violating terror financing laws, the most of any nation, according to the Financial Action Task Force. At the same time, a unique anti-radicalization program attempts to reintegrate the prisoners into society. Through education, vocational training, family counseling, psychological therapy and religious discussion, the program hopes to change the behavior of convicted extremists.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Sawab Centre, established in Abu Dhabi in July 2015, counters Daesh propaganda across the region. Rather than focus on the brutality of Daesh, the center highlights the group’s ineptitude at establishing its self-proclaimed caliphate. In doing so, the center undercuts Daesh’s recruitment and fundraising. The UAE has also joined in coalition airstrikes in Iraq and sponsored initiatives such as Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence to Counter Violent Extremism, and the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies.



## NUMBER OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS BY REGION



## TOP FIVE FOREIGN FIGHTER NATIONALITIES



Source: The Soufan Group, December 2015

Jordan shares about 375 miles of its border with Syria and Iraq, and the Soufan Group estimates about 2,000 Jordanians have joined Daesh and the al-Nusrah Front. In response, Jordan has passed counterterrorism laws with tough prison sentences.

Countries in Central and South Asia are also working to stop the flow. Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have announced campaigns to blunt recruitment to Syria and Iraq. The Kyrgyz government established outreach events to appeal to young people typically recruited as fighters.

As in Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan has made fighting abroad a criminal offense. Kazakhstan has won a dozen convictions under its terror financing laws. It offers education and other opportunities to keep its youth on track and allocated \$600 million for a preventive program called Countering Religious Extremism and Terrorism.

European countries subjected to terror atrocities have renewed efforts to share information about terrorists and recruiters living in their midst. *The New York Times* reports that at least 14 European countries have made receiving terrorism training a criminal offense, and nine have criminalized travel to the war zones of Syria and Iraq. Two trials in April 2016 involving French terrorist cells resulted in 10-year sentences for “criminal conspiracy with

the aim of preparing acts of terrorism.”

In February 2016, Belgian police arrested 10 people they said were part of a network recruiting people to fight with Daesh in Syria. That same week, 31 people faced trial for belonging to a terrorist group recruiting for Daesh between 2012 and 2014.

A month later, European education ministers gathered in Paris to discuss ways to counter the messages by terror groups that seem to resonate with young people. As Al Jazeera reported, the educators worked with the Radicalization Awareness Network, a network of teachers, social workers, health officials and others who engage with at-risk youth, on ways detect radicalization at an early stage and prevent them from heading down the wrong path.

## Conclusion

The U.N. Security Council in 2014 cited an urgent need to stem the foreign-fighter flow, calling on all nations to prevent the “recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping of individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning of, or participation in terrorist acts.”

Coalition nations have responded with a multifaceted strategy that is thinning the ranks of foreign fighters and preventing their replenishment. ♦



**A Pakistani Soldier protects displaced people near North Waziristan.**

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



# PAKISTANIS RETURN HOME

CIVIL-MILITARY  
COOPERATION HELPS  
CLEAR TERRORISTS FROM  
REGIONS OF PAKISTAN

SHAHID SADIQ AND JACOB DOYLE

It was a warm spring day in March 2015 when a caravan of 26 vehicles unloaded members of 62 families at the Kajhuri check post in Mir Ali, North Waziristan, Pakistan. They were greeted by Maj. Gen. Jamil Akhtar Rao and other officers of the Pakistan Army. As a gentle breeze swayed the surrounding palm trees, the group of travelers assembled in a clearing to await processing. One man began to beat a traditional duff drum while several others broke into a version of the Bhangra folk dance. After a year or more of displacement, the group of men, women and children had returned to their home territory, and they were celebrating.



This homecoming to the war-torn Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan was made possible by coordinated efforts on the part of Pakistan's Army, its Disaster Management Authorities, various United Nations agencies including the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and a number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). It marked the beginning of a steady and increasing flow of returning internally displaced people (IDPs), recently estimated at 38 percent of those originally displaced.

"With unflinching resolve and courage, our proud tribesmen of FATA and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stood up to atrocities of the terrorists, pushed them back and marginalized them in the society," said Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Gen. Raheel Sharif as he addressed the topic of returning displaced people at a February 2016 meeting in Peshawar. "We are in the most difficult phase of the operation, physically rebuilding the war-damaged areas, resettling of IDPs and eventually establishing an administrative system that focuses on the needs and aspirations of the people."

Military operations against terrorists launched in 2009 and 2014 in the FATA districts of North and South Waziristan and an earlier operation in Pakistan's province of Balochistan led to the displacement of up to 2 million Pakistani citizens from about 300,000 families. Many of these people were sheltered in camps, while many more stayed with relatives and friends, typically in cities.

An estimated 75 percent of the displaced population are women and children, according to the FATA Disaster Management Authority, and about 21 percent of the households returning so far are headed by women.

### RELIEF COORDINATION

The camps for displaced people are largely run by Pakistani civilian agencies and located in FATA and the neighboring province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where they are managed by the local Provincial Disaster Management Authority. Relief supplies and money have come from a number of sources, including the U.N. World Food Programme, the Pakistan Army, civilian contributions, and donor countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

Most displaced people, however, have opted to stay with host communities, rather than in camps, which has affected the government response to their displacement. The extended displacement has had an impact as well. Families displaced by the 2014 military operation were expected to return home in three to four months — a period extended to nearly two years.

Pakistan's Army has played a central role in helping the displaced people, from dispensing relief supplies at the time of displacement to providing security clearances to NGO relief agencies and helping people return to their areas of origin. When displaced families relocated from North Waziristan at the onset of the Operation Zarb-e-Azb counterterrorism operation in June 2014, the Army was there to meet them and distribute relief provisions in the settlements of Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Tank, according to the Inter Services Public Relations office of Pakistan's Armed Forces.

In addition, the Army collected relief supplies at



**Internally displaced Pakistanis wait for goods from the United Nations at a distribution center in Peshawar, Pakistan.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

donation points across the country, treated thousands of displaced people at its Khalifa Gul Nawaz hospital in Bannu, and arranged for veterinary treatment for displaced families' livestock. More recently, the Army has been working with the regional disaster management authority to facilitate each round of returning displaced people, guiding convoys through checkpoints to reach their home territories.

#### **U.N. ROLE**

In responding to the needs of displaced Pakistanis, the UNHCR has taken the cluster approach that it first applied in Pakistan after a 2005 earthquake.

This approach pools the resources of U.N. and non-U.N. organizations to address peoples' needs in times of disaster.

In areas such as South Waziristan, Bara in Khyber Agency and North Waziristan, UNHCR supported the return of 750,000 displaced people in 2015 and early 2016. It took the lead managing camps and shelters and providing nonfood items to hundreds of thousands of people.

#### **CHALLENGES OF NGOS**

Bringing NGOs on board the various clusters in times of need has presented its own challenges,







**Pakistani troops deliver aid to earthquake survivors in Lahore.**

as has been widely reported in Pakistan's media. The need for security and legitimacy clearance is cited as the reason for restricting NGOs from operating in Pakistan until they obtain a permit from local government and the Army.

The U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported in October 2015 that delays in receiving such permits had complicated a number of projects supported by the U.N.'s Pakistan Humanitarian Pooled Fund, citing an

average waiting time of 26 days. However, the same report stated that 23 projects were implemented in the areas hosting displaced people, facilitated by cluster NGOs that had received permits.

Among the approved NGOs are the UAE-based Hayat Foundation, the Centre of Excellence for Rural Development and the National Rural Support Program. Among other services, NGOs are educating residents about the risk of land mines through discussions, leaflets and brochures.



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The government and relief agencies used TV and radio broadcasts, as well as camp visits, to publicize the rounds of returns and to disseminate important information to prospective returnees. UNOCHA reported success in the summer of 2015 with a program of dispensing cash grants to returnees to ease their resettlement. It cited the example of Khan Auro, a mother of 11, who was able to rebuild her home in Khyber Agency and buy provisions with a \$250 grant delivered to her as a prepaid ATM card.

“We traveled to Peshawar to withdraw the funds,” said Auro, acknowledging the lack of an ATM near her

home, “and to use the card at authorized EasyPaisha shops. I received the money in three installments.”

Families whose homes were destroyed have been eligible to receive additional grants and temporary shelters.

Nagging issues continue to plague displaced families, such as the lack of convenient and affordable access to health care and questions concerning the sustainable livelihoods of the returnees. However, the commitment for displaced people to return home remains strong.

“There are signs of improvement. Things are getting better,” said Shahid Ehsan, program manager at the Pakistan-based Society for Human Rights and Prisoners’ Aid. “More and more people are returning to their places of origin because the majority of the area is becoming clear.” The recent return-intention survey indicated that the majority of people displaced do want to return immediately, and a very insignificant number would prefer to return in a month’s time because of ongoing commitments in the host areas.”

### MILITARY SUPPORT

So far, Pakistan’s Army, and in particular Gen. Sharif, have received strong popular support for clearing territories of terrorists and helping displaced people return. How long the cleared areas of FATA and Khyber will remain free from terrorism is itself a topic of debate among experts.

“Whether the nonstate actors who fled into Afghanistan during the FATA military operations come back or not,” said Rebecca Zimmerman, associate policy analyst at the Rand Corp., “part of that depends on how well Pakistan does at keeping Taliban actors at the negotiating table.”

Zimmerman added that conditions on the Afghan side of the border with Waziristan could also play a role — namely the strength and success of Afghanistan’s government and military. She acknowledged that it was a breakdown in negotiations between the Pakistani government and the nonstate actors that led to the military operation in 2014. She indicated that a lasting solution will probably need to take the form of a “cross-border effort,” involving the four participants in the February 2016 Quadrilateral Talks — Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the United States.

“If the major regional powers aren’t able to work together on the issues,” said Zimmerman, “this will likely impact the refugee phenomenon.”

For the time being, these sections of northern Pakistan are relatively peaceful, and displaced families continue to return to their home territories. The government of Pakistan and its partners vow to rebuild infrastructure to ensure that resettlement is both durable and successful. ♦



A large, abstract, blue wireframe sphere composed of many overlapping, curved lines, creating a sense of depth and motion. It is centered on the page against a dark blue background with a subtle grid of small white dots.

# MANAGING THE MESSAGE

**COALITION PARTNERS WORK TOWARD  
INCREASING COORDINATION IN THE  
INFORMATION WAR AGAINST DAESH**



BY JOHN REDFIELD, U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**E**mphasizing the importance of fighting Daesh in the information environment, 19 countries sent 65 representatives to a coalition military conference May 3-4, 2016, in London. The focus was on strategic communications efforts to combat the terrorist group's information campaign.

This first-of-its-kind conference, sponsored by the Combined Forces Command (CFC) and hosted by the British Ministry of Defence, was designed to enhance the coalition's network of information operations and public affairs professionals with necessary guidance, capabilities and resources to seize the initiative and maintain momentum against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

The conference drew the participation of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and 15 other countries in Europe, Asia and Australia.

At this point in the overall campaign against Daesh, pressure on the terrorist group has never been greater, Gen. Joseph Votel, commander of CFC and U.S. Central Command, said in a video message to conference participants. "Every day we see the benefits of the broad coalition we have assembled. The coalition is rich in unique and diverse capabilities," the general said. "We must understand all these capabilities and bring them to bear against Daesh."

Votel added that he sees an opportunity for coalition communicators. "I believe we have the ability to enhance our credibility through key leader engagements at the local, regional and national levels. Furthermore, I believe we can persuade and influence specific enemy and at-risk audiences through information operations capabilities. Finally, I believe we can inform and educate broader international publics through invigorated and expanded series of public affairs initiatives."

In addition to the participating nations' representatives, conference attendees came from civil and military organizations that coordinate with military communicators, including the Global Coalition's Communication Cell, embedded in the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London. The head of that cell, Dan Chugg, discussed his organization's efforts against Daesh:

"To defeat Daesh in the propaganda war, the cell manages campaign activity that aims to hasten the collapse of the

Daesh 'brand,' targeting the group's claims to statehood, success and supremacy. The cell seeks to achieve this by working in partnership with others, sharing best practices and pooling resources. Campaigns in Iraq and Syria provide testimony on the truth of life under Daesh. Working with and through credible voices, we are leaving no space uncontested; targeting key audiences; revealing Daesh's failed proposition; and emboldening and empowering moderate voices. The overarching narrative is that Daesh is failing on their own terms. By defining and highlighting Daesh failures, and by making clear that only Daesh is responsible for its actions, we will make the Daesh 'brand' less appealing. Conversely, we should not concentrate too much on coalition success, as this risks playing into Daesh's narrative of victimhood."

Besides the cell in London, other organizations participating in the conference were the Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve and the U.S. State Department's Global Engagement Center. Special Envoy and Coordinator of the Global Engagement Center Michael Lumpkin addressed participants via video teleconference, discussing ways in which his organization coordinates, integrates and synchronizes U.S. messaging efforts against Daesh. He highlighted that one way in which we must combat Daesh's effort to crowdsource terrorism is to emphasize efforts that seek to stem the group's recruitment efforts.

While the conference featured some large-group sessions,

the majority of the time was spent in smaller groups focused on information operations and public affairs issues. Royal Netherlands Army Lt. Col. Remy Van Strien led the public affairs syndicate discussions and called the conference a "unique opportunity to discuss face-to-face with the coalition communicators, without the limitations we have using email and video teleconference. In this setting, talking about developments, opportunities and limitations stimulates the mutual understanding between the partner

nations and thus strengthens our network. This was a good step forward developing our common effort from information sharing into real coordination: many voices — one message!"

Though the conference in London was the first of its kind, it is not intended to be the last. If your nation has an interest in participating in CFC's strategic communication efforts against Daesh and future conferences on this subject, please contact Lt. Col. Curt Kellogg at CFC/U.S. Central Command headquarters at [curtis.j.kellogg.mil@mail.mil](mailto:curtis.j.kellogg.mil@mail.mil) ♦



**Representatives of 19 countries attended the Combined Forces Command Coalition Communicators Conference in London on May 3 and 4, 2016.**





## SENIOR LEADER PROFILE

# A Focus on Special Forces



**Maj. Gen.  
Bismellah Waziri  
leads the  
Afghan National Army  
Special Operations  
Command**

UNIPATH STAFF

It makes Afghan Maj. Gen. Bismellah Waziri proud to talk about the men he commands.

As the head of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC), he leads battle-tested warriors who approach their missions with professionalism and courage. They are highly trained and fiercely dedicated to a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

“Enemies are scared when they hear the name commandos,” he said.

Maj. Gen. Waziri met with *Unipath* while attending the International Special Operations Forces conference and the Special Operations Forces Industry Conference in Tampa, Florida, in May 2016 and shared insights into what it takes to lead this unique command. He said conferences like the one in Tampa provide an important forum for sharing ideas and gaining new perspectives on the war on terror.

“The threats currently in Afghanistan are not limited to Afghanistan,” he said. “These are transnational threats.”

Decades of turmoil have given Afghan leaders a unique perspective, and Maj. Gen. Waziri has used those experiences to hone the training of his country’s elite forces.

“The world knows that we have a critical role in the stability of Afghanistan — critical to the future of the nation,” he told *Unipath*.

He can point to a number of successful missions over the past year. In May 2016, special forces conducted a nighttime helicopter raid that freed 60 captives from a Taliban prison in the southern province of Helmand. In early October 2015, special forces were part of an offensive that pushed the Taliban from the city of Kunduz in northern Afghanistan. That same month, backed by U.S. airstrikes, special forces destroyed a large al-Qaida training camp in Kandahar province near the Pakistan border.

An integral component of ANASOC’s success is the faith people have in its capabilities. “We have been able to gain the trust of the people of Afghanistan,” Maj. Gen. Waziri said.

The commander was born in Kabul in 1966 and grew up in the Barmal district of Paktia province. In 1981, holding the rank of

captain, he attended military school in Afghanistan and graduated in 1985 with a bachelor's degree from the Infantry Department of the Military University. From 1986 to 1987 he served as a company commander for the Ministry of Defense, and from 1990 to 1992 he served as chief of staff of the Reconnaissance Detachment of the 9th Infantry Division.

He disengaged from the military during the Taliban era, but the post-Taliban Afghan Ministry of Defense appointed him battalion commander in 2004. He underwent the Afghan National Army's commando training in 2007. That led to his assignment as commander of the 3rd Commando Battalion in Kandahar province.

He served as chief of operations of ANASOC in

2009, and in 2011 he was appointed chief of staff of ANASOC. His appointment to commander came in 2015. He now oversees the development and operations of two brigades and 13 battalions, also known as kandaks in Afghanistan. ANASOC also encompasses the School of Excellence — used to ensure forces are skilled at calling in airstrikes, conducting surveillance of terrorists and their supporters, and other special operations missions.

Although Maj. Gen. Waziri knows the future holds challenges for the security of his country, he is proud of his role in promoting change and protecting the people of Afghanistan.

"I was able to achieve my dreams," he said.



**Waziri addresses Afghan National Army Special Forces Soldiers during a conference in November 2013 at Camp Commando near Kabul.**

MASTER SGT. MICHAEL J. CARDEN/U.S. ARMY





## AROUND THE REGION



# Kazakhstan Border Guards Trained to Detect Forgeries

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Kazak border guards attended a training seminar in March 2016 in Almaty to learn about document integrity and methods of detecting document forgery and imposters. The event was organized by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Border Guard Service under the National Security Committee.

Experts from Austria and Kazakhstan shared best practices in international document security, including the identification of falsified travel documents, document control, the use of paper and polymer substitutes for document security, conventional printing techniques, photo protection, secondary verification, profiling and psychological techniques to identify potential criminals during border crossings. Participants were provided with training material developed by the Austrian Federal Ministry for the Interior on increasing operational awareness to detect forged documents.

“The ability to confirm a person’s identification is a key instrument to preventing unauthorized entry into your country,” said Colin McCullough, political officer at the OSCE Programme Office in Astana. “Doing so requires a thorough understanding of how other countries produce and verify their documents, and it is through sharing these practices that countries can best cooperate.”

Col. Marat Magzhanov, head of the Directory of

Border Control, said the importance of cooperation among nations can’t be overstated because of “the increase in global threats associated with illegal migration, manifestations of violent extremism and terrorism, all of which have a transnational character.”

The seminar was part of the office’s long-standing efforts to promote the OSCE border security concept in Kazakhstan.

Learn more about this event and other OSCE programs at <http://www.osce.org>



**A border guard applies his newly acquired knowledge about document printing methods during a practical exercise.**

OSCE/MIKHAIL ASSAFOV

## UZBEKISTAN BOLSTERS BORDER SECURITY

UNIPATH STAFF

An Uzbek border crossing has received a \$2.8-million upgrade, the first of several improvements along a strategically important border exploited by criminals to smuggle illegal drugs and contraband.

Completed in the summer of 2016, the upgrade to the Lyavob Border Post was a joint project between the Uzbekistan State Border Protection Committee and U.S. Central Command’s Interagency Group Counter Narcotics Division through the U.S. Embassy’s Special Projects Office.

The new facility will enable border guards to prevent the flow of drugs and the illegal movement of people across the border. Terror groups use the proceeds of drug sales to

finance their campaigns, and porous borders enable foreign fighters to join terrorist organizations.

The upgrades included officer quarters, a horse stable, dog kennels, an administrative building, a fuel pump station and new living areas. These new facilities allow border agents to better coordinate countercontraband efforts and sustain a larger force to patrol this important area.

Uzbekistan was responsible for the project’s security and the construction of retention walls, and Uzbekistan’s site coordinator was instrumental to the project’s success.

The upgraded border crossing is expected to be the first in a series of border security upgrades in Uzbekistan.



## UAE FINDS 38 GUILTY IN TERROR CASE

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The top security court in the United Arab Emirates sentenced 38 people to prison in connection with a cell accused of plotting terrorist attacks and seeking to overthrow the government to create an Islamic state.

Prosecutors said the Minaret Youth cell included Emirati as well as non-Emirati members. The group had also been charged with forming committees to recruit young Emiratis and of planning to assassinate top government officials in the country. Some members had also been accused of being members of Daesh in Iraq and Syria and al-Qaida's one-time branch in Syria, al-Nusrah Front.

The state-run WAM news agency reported that the Federal Supreme Court's state security chambers sentenced 11 of the defendants to life in prison, though two were tried in absentia. Another two were sentenced to 15 years, 13 were sentenced to 10 years, six to three years, two to five years, and four to six months in prison.

Seven others were acquitted, according to WAM. The official report did not give details on what the defendants had been found guilty of.

Abu Dhabi-based *The National* reported on its website that only two defendants pleaded guilty in court. The newspaper said the group's leader, Khalid Abdulla Kalantar, had been a preacher at a mosque in Dubai who encouraged and promoted extremism.

The UAE is part of the coalition carrying out airstrikes against Daesh in Syria and Iraq.

## Egypt Fosters Bilateral Relations

UNIPATH STAFF

Egypt affirmed its strong ties with the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan in separate events in late March and early April 2016. On both occasions, Egyptian officials noted the importance of bilateral relationships in maintaining security across the region.

Sedki Sobhi, Egypt's minister of defense and military production, met with Mohammed bin Nakhira Al Dhaheri, the UAE's ambassador to Egypt and permanent representative to the Arab League, as the ambassador marked the end of his tenure. Sobhi reflected on the strong Egyptian-Emirati ties, especially in defense operations.

A week later, in Islamabad, Egyptian and Pakistani officials agreed to enhance the cooperation and information sharing between their armed forces to counter the terrorism threat facing their nations.

The Pakistani secretary of defense, retired Lt. Gen. Muhammad Alam Khattak, underlined the need for mutual military training when he met with the Egyptian defense delegation led by Brig. Gen. Khalid Abdel-Waris Mohamed, director general of foreign military cooperation of ministry of defense. "This exchange of visits will help to look at new avenues of mutual defense cooperation and collaboration" he said.

Sources: Emirates News Agency-WAM, *The Nation*



Egyptian Defense Minister Sedki Sobhi





## Bahrain Hosts Marine Symposium

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY MARCENT

Marine forces operating throughout the Middle East and South Asia gathered at the Gulf Hotel in Bahrain in March 2016 for the inaugural Regional Marine Symposium.

Sixteen partners from six countries (Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) attended, along with U.S. Marines. Briefs were presented by representatives from the 77th Royal Jordanian Marine Battalion, the Kuwait Marine Battalion, the Royal Saudi Naval Forces-Marine Forces and by the UAE Presidential Guard.

Day two consisted of discussions on the history of Marine forces, common threats, common goals and employment best practices. Marine Corps Forces Central Command (MARCENT) hosted the event to advance security objectives and foster professional relationships among the Marine forces and naval infantries.

The event helped to increase mutual understanding of the composition and capabilities of the partner nations fighting violent extremist organizations. The event resulted in a greater awareness of exercise opportunities and of each partner's contributions to regional security.

To close the symposium, MARCENT Commander Lt. Gen. William D. Beydler highlighted the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships among the Marine forces within the region.



**Lt. Col. Hisham Khaleel Mubarak Al Jarrah speaks at the inaugural Regional Marine Symposium in Manama, Bahrain.**



**Conferees gather at the symposium to foster professional relationships between the Marine forces and naval infantries operating in the Middle East and South Asia.**



# Afghan Youth Deradicalized

UNIPATH STAFF

A program aimed at reintegrating radicalized youths into mainstream society is getting remarkable results in Afghanistan. The De-radicalization of Afghan Youth (DAY) program helps Afghans under 18 who have been placed in juvenile rehabilitation centers for committing acts against Afghan and coalition forces and are considered national security threats. Some cooperated with terrorists by forging documents, while others planned suicide attacks and other violent activities.

Enrollees attend three hours of classes five days a week and are taught Islam from a properly vetted instructor who is a mullah. The 12-month program is voluntary; every enrollee is there by choice. The program operates from six regional centers: Kabul, Jalalabad, Logar, Kandahar, Helmand and Herat. After initial reluctance to even acknowledge they are members of a terrorist group, participants eventually speak openly about their experiences and denounce violence and terror.

Recently, the DAY program received its first Daesh-Khorasan members for deradicalization. The classes include debates about topics related to Islam, and the instructors dispel terrorist spins on common Islamic themes. The debates are recorded so the staff can analyze the participants' arguments and become more effective at dispelling terrorist/extremist propaganda. They develop a deeper understanding of the ideological differences among violent extremist organizations (VEOs).

"The deradicalization program is very effective, and changes (the participants') way of thinking," said Mohammad Seddiq Siddiqi, director of the juvenile rehabilitation centers.

He lauded the program as one of the only successful efforts to deradicalize Afghan youth. When asked the primary method VEOs use to recruit at-risk youth, he said it was through a selective and contorted "religious" indoctrination program run

in madrassas in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He was amazed at how little these juveniles actually know about basic Islam. They could only cite the phrases and sections of the Quran taught by the VEOs.

When the DAY imams would recite basic and fundamental passages from the Quran, such as "killing one person is the same as killing all of humanity," the participants denied the existence of such passages. This demonstrated to Siddiqi that the tool used to exploit these young men was not blind obedience to Islam, but the near complete ignorance and lack of knowledge about even the basic tenets of Islam.

This has brought about an increased emphasis not only on teaching moderate Islam, but on basic education as well. The correlation has become apparent between radicalization susceptibility and lack of education, Siddiqi said.

Additionally, youths deradicalized by the program will visit juvenile centers to share success stories with current inmates. These young men explain how they were exploited and what made them see through VEO deceit and manipulation.

"The deradicalization program helps the juveniles calm down and become less aggressive," said Mir Fayazuddin Amini, director of the center in Kabul. "The juveniles regret what they've been doing."

They urge their peers not to be deceived by the Taliban and other terrorist groups. "Most of them who were arrested in connection with terrorist attacks have been given the wrong religious education and therefore, here, religious scholars teach them every day — in the morning and evening," Amini said.

"After this I will study and I ask others also not to be deceived by the Taliban," one of the boys told TOLONews, a 24-hour news channel.

Siddiqi hopes to expand the DAY program to more provinces.





## Qatar Active at Defense Conference

UNIPATH STAFF

The annual Doha International Maritime Defense Exhibition & Conference in March 2016 was the largest and most comprehensive to date, drawing 9,000 visitors and delegations from over 60 countries.

International and local exhibitors presented the latest in maritime defense technology to buyers, built business connections, discussed the latest trends in the industry and secured deals.

Host country Qatar signed 10 memoranda of understanding with a number of international companies for supplying and developing the Qatari Armed Forces. Among them were deals involving boats, radar, drones, missiles and training for pilots. Sources: Qatar News Agency, DIMDEX website



**Qatari Minister of State for Defence Affairs Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah, second from right, and French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, seated, second from left, attend the fifth Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference in March 2016.** AFP/GETTY IMAGES

## Jordan Counters Terror Propaganda

UNIPATH STAFF

Jordan and the United States have expanded joint efforts to counter the distorted propaganda spewing from Daesh and other violent extremist groups.

An agreement signed in April 2016 by Richard Stengel, the U.S. undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, and Jordan's ambassador to the U.S., Alia Hatoug Bouran, aims to disrupt the recruitment of foreign fighters and online fundraising by the groups.

"Through the partnership, Jordan and the United States will expand media efforts to rapidly and effectively counter propaganda from Daesh and other violent extremist groups," according to a statement issued after the agreement's signing.

The U.S.-Jordan partnership "will focus on presenting independent voices from Jordan and across the region that will amplify moderate and constructive narratives and a positive and peaceful vision of the future," the statement said.

Mohammad Momani, Jordan's minister of state for media affairs and communications, said the agreement is part of Jordan's overall strategy to defeat terrorism.

Fighting Daesh needs to be addressed militarily and ideologically, Momani said, adding that Jordan has a long-term ideological approach that aims to counter terrorism and promote moderation.

"Few Jordanians have been radicalized, and the country deals with them using different ideological tools," the minister noted.

Jordan and the U.S. are also cooperating militarily in fighting Daesh because the kingdom is a member of an international coalition directed against the extremist group.

Sources: *The Jordan Times*. U.S. State Department



**Mohammad Momani, Jordan's minister of state for media affairs and communications, announces an agreement with the U.S. to stop terrorists from raising money and attracting foreign fighters.**

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



# Oman, Pakistan Participate in Naval Exercises

UNIPATH STAFF

The Royal Navy of Oman hosted two Pakistan Navy ships at Port Sultan Qaboos in April 2016 for a three-day visit that was part training exercise and part goodwill gesture.

The Pakistan Navy has a history of sharing its expertise with Oman, according to Commodore Mohammed Shuaib, commander of the 9th Auxiliary and Mine Warfare Squadron of the Pakistan Navy.

“Our doors are open to them, so whenever a request is made by the brotherly country of Oman, we will be pleased to entertain it,” he said. Shuaib said Oman and Pakistan are united in their fight against illegal activities at sea, which disrupt trade and pose security risks to the region.

“Unless you have collaborative arrangements between the countries, Oman, Pakistan or any other country, we won’t be able to keep a check on illegal activities, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking and illegal fishing. We are cooperating in this matter to facilitate trade in the area,” the commodore said.

The Omani Coast Guard was included in the training. “This will enhance the capacity of both countries, foster mutual understanding and enhance interoperability,” Shuaib said. He added that more operations are planned.

The exercises were similar to those held in December 2014, when Oman hosted four Pakistani ships in what was described as the largest exercise of the series. The exercise was a response to the growing terror threat and coordinated efforts to thwart piracy at sea.

Sources: Times of Oman, MUSCATDAILY.com



Entrance to Muscat Harbor, Oman

ISTOCK



## YEMENI FORCES ROUT AL-QAIDA

REUTERS

Yemeni government forces and their Emirati allies took control of the country’s largest oil export terminal from al-Qaida in April 2016 after ousting the terrorists from their nearby stronghold. The coalition is depriving the terrorists of the lucrative minstate they had built up over the course of a year, based around the southwestern port city of Mukalla.

About 80 percent of Yemen’s oil reserves were exported in peacetime from the Ash Shihr terminal, 68 kilometers east along the coast from Mukalla, which has been shut since the war began and al-Qaida seized the area.

A statement by the mostly Gulf Arab coalition said the offensive killed 800 al-Qaida fighters and several leaders. A Yemeni military source said 30 al-Qaida fighters had been killed.

Residents said local clerics and tribesmen had tried to persuade the al-Qaida fighters to leave quietly and that they had withdrawn westward to the neighboring province of Shabwa. Local Yemeni officials said 2,000 Yemeni and Emirati troops advanced into Mukalla, taking control of its maritime port and airport and setting up checkpoints throughout the southern city.

Al-Qaida, which has planned several foiled bombing attempts on Western-bound airliners and claimed credit for the 2015 attack at the Charlie Hebdo magazine’s offices in Paris, was taking in about \$2 million a day in tax from the Yemeni port.

**A Yemeni Soldier patrols a street in Mukalla after government forces drove al-Qaida terrorists from the city.**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE





# U.N. Aid Arrives for Syrians

UNIPATH STAFF

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) conducted a successful food drop for people trapped in the besieged eastern city of Deir Ezzor in Syria. The April 2016 delivery marked the first food assistance to reach parts of the city since March 2014.

In January 2016, U.N. humanitarian agencies said the city's residents, mostly women and children, faced sharply deteriorating conditions and needed urgent humanitarian assistance amid reports of malnutrition and deaths due to starvation.

A total of 20 metric tons — enough to feed 2,500 people for a month — were dropped by a WFP-chartered aircraft, the agency said. The aircraft flew from the airport in Marka, Jordan. Airdrops are

always a last resort, as land access is easier and the most cost-effective way of delivering food, the agency said.

Over 200,000 people have been living under siege in Deir Ezzor since March 2014 and are in need of humanitarian care.

In February, WFP carried out its first high-altitude airdrop ever, dropping 21 tons of food on Deir Ezzor. But technical problems meant some of the pallets missed the drop zone, and some were damaged because parachutes failed to function properly.

Across Syria, WFP provides food to more than 4 million people every month and remains concerned about the Syrians living in hard-to-reach areas harassed by Daesh.

Sources: United Nations, *The Peninsula*



A man fishes in a river in Deir Ezzor, Syria. Food shortages have been reported in the city since 2014.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



## Pakistan, Turkmenistan Find **Strength** in Unity

UNIPATH STAFF

As part of a wide-ranging agreement, Pakistan and Turkmenistan are joining forces to curb money laundering and terror financing.

Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met in Islamabad in March 2016 and agreed to greater cooperation on trade, energy, agriculture, education, science and technology, infrastructure and transportation.

A memorandum of understanding related to money laundering and terrorism financing was signed by Pakistani Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and his Turkmen counterpart, Muhammetguly Muhammedov.

The Pakistani prime minister said his country is committed to the early completion of the multibillion dollar Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project that will provide greater economic security for the region through increased integration between South and Central Asia.

“Pakistan is ready to provide any assistance to expedite the implementation process of TAPI and help minimize the project cost,” he said, adding that Pakistan views TAPI not only as a gas pipeline project, but as a precursor to making it a trade and transit corridor as well.

On terrorism, Sharif said Pakistan shares the concern that terrorism and extremism are the root causes of insecurity and instability in the region. “This menace also undermines our endeavors for socio-economic development. We have to work collectively to eradicate the scourge of terrorism and extremism,” he said.



**Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, right, receives Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in Islamabad in March 2016. The two leaders pledged to fight terror financing.** THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Turkmen President Berdimuhamedov said both countries face common challenges and “combating common threats is our goal.” He said the early completion of TAPI would solidify relations between participating countries and create new opportunities.

Both leaders said the threat of extremism and terrorism needed to be countered collectively to ensure peace in the region.

Sources: China.org.cn, The Nation (Pakistan), thenews.com.pk

## KYRGYZ REPUBLIC JOINS ANTI-CORRUPTION GROUP

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

The Kyrgyz Republic has joined an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) anti-corruption group that helps countries adopt best practices for fighting corruption, which can weaken a nation’s defenses. A Kyrgyz delegation attended the 71st Plenary and Working Group Sessions of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) in Strasbourg, France, in March 2016.

By participating in GRECO, the Kyrgyz Republic can monitor its compliance with the Council of Europe anti-corruption standards through a process of mutual evaluation and peer pressure. It will help the Kyrgyz Republic identify

deficiencies in national anti-corruption policies and prompt necessary legislative, institutional and practical reforms.

“We support the Kyrgyz government and the General Prosecutor’s Office, in particular, on the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the anti-corruption conventions of the Council of Europe,” said Sergey Kapinos, head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek.

GRECO was established in 1999 by the Council of Europe to monitor compliance with the organization’s anti-corruption standards. It provides a platform for sharing best practices in the prevention and detection of corruption.

Learn more about this event and other OSCE programs at <http://www.osce.org>





# Lebanon Battles Scourge of Land Mines

UNIPATH STAFF

The danger of land mines and unexploded devices is particularly acute for children, who are attracted by the sometimes colorful and curious designs.

The presence of abandoned land mines and unexploded devices violates nearly all the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a multilateral human rights treaty that promotes children's rights worldwide. Children have a right to life, to a safe environment in which to play, to health, clean water, sanitation and adequate education.

In July 2006, south Lebanon was bombarded in nearly 1,300 locations with more than 4 million cluster munitions, contaminating 55 square kilometers and affecting over 1 million people, or about a third of the population. The unexploded devices are a major threat to the welfare of children living there.

Through support from the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC), the University of Balamand and UNICEF, children who survive mine explosions are receiving psychological support and rehabilitation.

It takes decades to clear the land mines, and protecting children from them is a major commitment for UNICEF. It works with partners to make children and families aware of the threat and enable them to live safely with the presence of land mines and other remnants of war.

Between November 2015 and March 2016, more than 240,000 girls, boys and caregivers were involved in mine awareness programs by scouts and youth associations and nongovernmental organizations.

Additionally, trained workers known as deminers, many of them

women, have used hand-held metal detectors to clear hundreds of thousands of unexploded devices in south Lebanon. Despite progress, considerable areas remain contaminated. The Lebanese and international demining teams risk their lives every day.

According to the LMAC, several thousand people have been killed or injured since 1975 as a result of abandoned mines or other explosive devices. Casualties peaked in 2006, when 209 people were killed or injured between August and December. Through a comprehensive program, the number of deaths and injuries was reduced to six in 2011. Children are still affected, with 40 children under 12 years old and 75 adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 killed or injured since 2006.

Sources: UNICEF, Lebanon Mine Action Center



**A United Nations peacekeeper explains the dangers of land mines to Lebanese schoolchildren.** AFP/GETTY IMAGES



## SAUDI ARABIA, EU CONSIDER JOINT ANTI-TERROR EFFORTS

UNIPATH STAFF

Saudi Arabia and the European Union will consider deepening counterterrorism coordination and working together on anti-radicalization efforts.

"You know very well that in Europe, as well as in other parts of the world, we are facing some challenges in that respect," Federica Mogherini, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, said at a May 2016 press conference with Saudi officials. "They are common challenges that we share,

so this could be a field of common work for the future we agreed to explore."

She met in Jeddah with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, who affirmed the kingdom's strong ties to the EU. In addition to regional security, the two

officials spoke about economic matters, visas, education and the situation in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya.

Al-Jubeir thanked the EU countries for their economic support for Syrian refugees residing in neighboring countries and Europe.

Mogherini said the EU and Saudi Arabia share a number of interests. "The relation between the European Union and Saudi Arabia is strong and deep in many different fields," Mogherini said.

Sources: Saudi Press Agency; [eeas.europa.eu/statements](http://eeas.europa.eu/statements)



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## IRAQ RECEIVES \$10 MILLION IN AID

UNIPATH STAFF

**Q**atar gave Iraq \$10 million in humanitarian aid to help citizens suffering from the country's terrorist conflicts. His Highness Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar ordered the assistance in April 2016.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry stressed that the gesture reflects Qatar's commitment to stand with the Iraqi people. The assistance includes food donations and medical care.

In coordination with international organizations and United Nations agencies, the Qatar Red Crescent Society and the Qatar Development Fund committed \$1 million to people living in Fallujah. In addition, an urgent intervention plan was prepared for several relief projects in and around Anbar province.

Sources: Qatar News Agency, Iraq Tradelink News Agency

## KUWAIT, TAJIKISTAN SHARE VIEWS ON TERRORISM

UNIPATH STAFF

**D**uring the inaugural bilateral meeting between Kuwait and Tajikistan, representatives of the two countries exchanged views on international and regional issues of mutual interest, including the fight against international terrorism, extremism, organized crime and drug trafficking.

The meeting was held in Dushanbe in April 2016 and co-chaired by Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ali Suleiman Al-Saeed and Tajik First Deputy Foreign Minister Nizomiddin Zohidi. Their talks focused on the prospects of a further expansion of political, economic, cultural, investment and humanitarian cooperation. Discussions included potential Kuwaiti investments and economic development projects in Tajikistan.

Relations between the two countries began in 1995, and Tajikistan's first ambassador to Kuwait, Zubaydullo Zubaydov, has said he hopes they will continue to cooperate in economic, trade and investment opportunities. Sources: Asia-Plus, Kuwait News Service



# SHARING KNOWLEDGE

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