

Navies Unite
in the Arabian Gulf

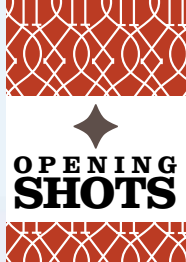
Forming Friendships
at Eager Lion

Afghan Forces
Embrace Air Power

UNIPATH

Forging Partnerships





The National Museum of Qatar, designed to resemble a desert rose, opened in 2019. ISTOCK



An Egyptian dye worker hauls yarn to dry in the sun in Cairo. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

6 Partners With a Purpose

Eight thousand troops attend Jordan's Eager Lion 19 exercise in a show of regional unity.

14 Empowering the Afghan Air Force

Blackhawk helicopter pilots develop their skills to support ground troops and combat terrorism.

Lt. Jack McCain, U.S. Navy

18 Unity on the Seas

The International Maritime Exercise in Bahrain draws 5,000 participants from 50 countries.

24 No Haven for Daesh

Iraqi and coalition forces destroy a terrorist staging ground on an island in the Tigris River.

Dr. Hussein Allawi, professor of national security, Nahrain University

28 Uzbekistan as Security Partner

The country's military establishment promotes cooperation to tackle Central Asian security challenges.

32 A Coordinated Response

Jordan's National Center for Security and Crisis Management brings together military and civilian agencies.

38 Weather's Role in Warfare

Afghan special operations forces rely on meteorologists to ensure mission success.

Staff Sgt. Hossein Rahimi, chief of meteorology, Afghan Special Mission Wing 777

40 Operation Sentinel:

A global partnership to deter maritime aggression.

42 Bolstering Regional Cooperation

Multinational military exercise focuses on strengthening partnerships.

46 Countering Terrorism

Maj. Gen. Hussein Al-Hawatmeh Promotes Professionalism as Director General of Public Security of Jordan

50 Brothers in Arms

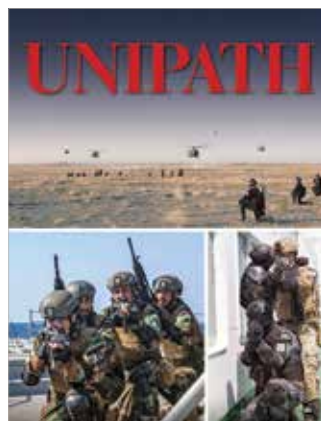
Jordanian forces attend a joint exercise focused on coastal defense in the United Arab Emirates.

Jordan Armed Forces, Directorate of Moral Guidance

52 Senior Leader Profile

Lt. Gen. Hashim Al-Rifai, Undersecretary of the Kuwait National Guard

56 Around the Region



ON THE COVER:

Regional security challenges are best solved by militaries cooperating with one another.

UNIPATH

Cooperative Security

Volume 10, Number 1



CENTCOM COMMANDER

Gen. Kenneth McKenzie Jr.
U.S. Marines



CONTACT US

Unipath

c/o Commander
U.S. Central Command
7115 S. Boundary Blvd.
MacDill AFB, FL 33621
USA

CENTCOM.
UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL

Unipath is a professional military magazine published quarterly by the Commander of the United States Central Command as an international forum for military personnel in the Middle East and Central Asia region. The opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent the policies or points of view of this command or any other agency of the U.S. government. Select articles are written by *Unipath's* staff, with credit for other content noted as needed. The Secretary of Defense has determined that publication of this magazine is necessary for conducting public business as required of the Department of Defense by law.

ISSN 2333-1844 (print)
ISSN 2333-1852 (online)



KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to U.S. Central Command for giving me the opportunity to write the opening article for this issue. It focuses on cooperative security, which aims to achieve more international consensus and cooperation, synchronize efforts to deal with new multidimensional threats, and provide a better understanding of common challenges.

Cooperative security is achieved only through partnerships and alliances between brotherly and friendly countries with common interests in security and military matters. These defensive partnerships and alliances enable member states to maintain readiness and respond rapidly to instability that threatens our common vital interests including stability, security and regional prosperity.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has diversified its efforts in terms of cooperative security, including training and multinational exercises, the international alliance for maritime protection, cyber security, joint work groups, civil-military cooperation, peacekeeping missions, drug control training, disaster relief and regional excellence centers.

Given the wide range of threats to the security environment, we must be prepared to confront challenges and threats, particularly terrorism and extremism. Therefore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on the international community to cooperate in eradicating terrorism that has affected the kingdom and many other countries in the world.

The kingdom has made exceptional efforts to enhance security, peace and stability at regional and international levels. Saudi Arabia provided the initiative to form an Islamic military alliance to combat terrorism. It will unify, coordinate and support Islamic efforts to fight terrorism in all forms and manifestations.

As His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud said, the formation of this alliance “originated as a concern in the Islamic world to respond to the terrorism epidemic and partner with the world as a group of countries in fighting it.” A joint operations center was established in Riyadh to coordinate and support military operations to combat terrorism and develop programs and mechanisms to defeat it.

Saudi Arabia took part in the international coalition mission “to counter Daesh on all fronts, dismantle its network and deter its international ambitions.” In addition to the military campaign in Iraq and Syria, Saudi Arabia is committed to “countering the financial and economic infrastructure of Daesh, preventing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters across the border, supporting stability and restoring basic public services to areas liberated from Daesh and countering Daesh propaganda.”

The strategy of combating terrorism in the kingdom includes addressing security, ideology and terror finance. As a strategic partner of the international coalition against Daesh, the kingdom, in conjunction with the United States and Italy, is co-chairing a task force focused on efforts to disrupt funding. Playing its role, Saudi Arabia has established a Terrorist Financing Targeting Center to help impose sanctions on those who finance terrorism



and to share intelligence with partners.

The kingdom has played a leading role by contributing millions of dollars to help restore stability in regions liberated from Daesh in Iraq and Syria. Humanitarian assistance was not limited to the regional level — the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center worked to help communities in about 45 countries around the world.

As you know, terrorist groups and organizations, whatever their religious affiliation and names might be, have violated sanctity, practiced killing and corruption on earth, terrorized populations, mastered treachery and betrayal, planted the seeds of hatred and promoted aggression and destruction.

The kingdom has therefore taken practical and effective initiatives to combat extremist ideology and wage preemptive media campaigns to counter misleading propaganda, including the establishment of the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology and the Ministry of Defense Ideological War Center. Along with other governmental and civil society organizations, these institutions seek to combat extremist ideology and promote tolerance, moderation, peace and stability.

The kingdom responded to the Yemeni government's legitimate call for the restoration of constitutional order in Yemen, and the kingdom, along with its Gulf Cooperation Council brothers — in cooperation with the United States and European countries — led a coalition to restore the legitimate government in Yemen and negotiate a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Since its inception, the coalition has striven to stop Houthi attacks on the Yemeni people, their rights and their property, attacks that have compromised the safety of countries in the region. The coalition to restore Yemen's legitimacy has not limited its effort to military operations; it has also been keen to help and protect the Yemeni people through humanitarian initiatives such as the Saudi Program for Development and Reconstruction in Yemen.

From the beginning, the Coalition Joint Forces Command has worked to enhance combat efficiency and force readiness while commanding combat operations based on emerging threats and the security environment at the regional level. It works in tandem with all branches of the Armed Forces that manage all training and operational activities of the forces, and coordinates and integrates with elements of the national forces, especially the military and other security forces.

The joint forces work with regional and international alliances to ensure the kingdom's security through qualitative excellence, readiness and the integrated ability to face the full spectrum of threats. It carefully recruits men with the highest levels of professionalism, competence, merit, training and motivation to carry out critical operations, effectively manage defensive capabilities, and achieve security through national, regional and international cooperation.

His Royal Highness Staff Lt. Gen. Prince Fahad bin Turki bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

Commander of Joint Forces of the Coalition
to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen



Jordanian Soldiers practice urban clearance maneuvers at Eager Lion.

SPC. SHADRACH HICKS/U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

PARTNERS *WITH A* PURPOSE

Eight Thousand Troops Attend Jordan's Eager Lion 19 Exercise in a Show of Regional Unity

UNIPATH STAFF



Jordan Armed Forces Maj. Gen. Yousef Al-Hunaiti, left, and U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Brad Swanson take turns addressing officers from 30 countries during a senior leader seminar.

SPC. SHADRACH HICKS/U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

They captured villages, cleared mines, scaled buildings, evacuated wounded, rescued hostages, defended coastlines, repulsed terrorists and parachuted from planes.

But what the 8,000 participants at Jordan's Eager Lion 19 military exercise achieved most of all was unity of purpose on the battlefield despite cultural, linguistic, logistical and technological differences.

Twenty-nine nations combined forces across Jordan in late August and early September 2019 in a demonstration of proficiency designed to defy enemies they might encounter in the region.

In addition to troops from the host nations of Jordan and the United States, participants arrived from Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Tajikistan, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

The complexity of the training scenarios matched the diversity of the participating forces. Troops from across the region had to counter not only independent, Daesh-like extremists, but state-sponsored militias backed by an aspiring regional hegemon.

“Traditional and emerging foes will continue to develop their capabilities, and we must do likewise together,” said Jordanian Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Al-Hunaiti. “We must strive to defeat not only our foes’ forces but also their ideology. Only by training together for the worst possible scenarios can we safeguard our society for future generations.”

Emblematic of that spirit of partnership were missions that required superior multinational coordination, including a massive live-fire demonstration on

the rolling desert, special operations forces raids and a maritime assault targeting a hijacked ocean liner.

In a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise on the final day of Eager Lion, Qatari quick reaction forces reinforced a Jordanian/U.S. operation to dislodge terrorists attempting a border incursion. Behind the front lines, a medical platoon from Saudi Arabia prepared to evacuate casualties.

Maj. Gen. Al-Hunaiti and U.S. Central Command Commander Gen. Kenneth McKenzie attended the event from an observation tent on a sandy knoll in the stony, bone-dry Jordanian Badia. They were joined by officers from dozens of countries.

Aerial attacks by helicopters, F-16 fighters and a B-52 bomber complemented artillery bombardments and missile fire from radar-guided high mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS) batteries. Advancing tanks raked ridges with fire as a rocket-propelled explosive charge designed to destroy mines cleared a path across the desert floor.

“That is one of the main objectives:
to improve and to enhance the
interoperability of our forces and to
also develop the capability to work
together in the future.”

~ Jordan Armed Forces Brig. Gen. Mohammad Al-Thalji,
director of joint exercises and training

Soldiers from a Jordanian mechanized infantry battalion conduct urban assault training. SGT. 1ST CLASS DARRON SALZER/U.S. ARMY





“Being able to coordinate with the countries that we have here and actually conduct military operations alongside of them sends an important message to the entire region, that the U.S. and our allies are focused on stability,” said U.S. Army Col. Grant Fawcett, whose Kuwait-based troops were engaged in the demonstration.

Jordan Armed Forces (JAF) Brig. Gen. Mohammad Al-Thalji, former director of joint exercises and training, praised the synchronization and cohesion of the multinational force.

“You could not make the American Soldiers out from the Jordanian Soldiers,” Al-Thalji said. “And that is one of the main objectives: to improve and to enhance the interoperability of our forces and to also develop the capability to work together in the future to meet and to reduce the challenges and threats that are threatening our safety and security.”

Sharing experiences with one another were more than 500 special operations troops from Jordan, the U.S., Italy, Qatar, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, Romania, Lebanon, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, France, Greece and Cyprus. They were assembled into task forces based on whether they specialized in land, sea or air missions.

Jordanian, Saudi and Qatari special operations joined forces to launch urban assaults by helicopter. Commandos from Jordan, Lebanon and Cyprus — taking instruction from a U.S. Air Force Special Tactics crew — practiced airdropping supplies to support operations behind enemy lines. In the Gulf of Aqaba, a joint special operations task force from Jordan, the U.S. and Qatar fast-roped from helicopters to search and seize a ferry in a hijacking scenario.

U.S. and Jordanian special operations troops addressed another complexity of the modern battlefield: countering enemy unmanned aerial vehicles.

A Jordan Armed Forces explosive ordnance disposal unit used robots, jammers and X-ray imaging to investigate a downed unmanned aerial vehicle, or drone. The goal was to exploit any intelligence the downed craft might provide and neutralize any explosives it might carry.

“We left today understanding how to integrate communications, overcome any language barriers, and how to respond to a very real scenario,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Bird.

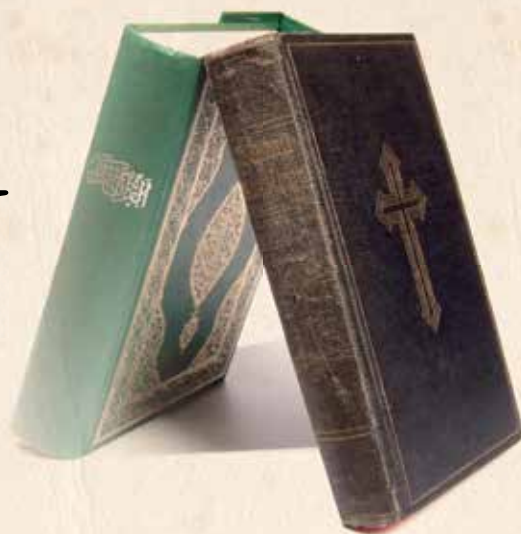
A more subtle demonstration of power engaged troops executing information operations

A joint special operations team from Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia prepares to leap from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

CPL. KEVIN PAYNE/U.S. ARMY

FAITH *IN* ACTION

Jordanian and U.S. Military Chaplains Lighten the Lives of Senior Citizens



UNIPATH STAFF

It was a special day at the Golden Age Home. Three imams in the Jordan Armed Forces, one playing a drum, performed a concert for dozens of elderly men and women assembled in the recreation room of the Amman retirement home.

What made the occasion even more festive were the gift bags handed out to residents. These were provided by U.S. Army chaplains who accompanied the imams to the retirement home as part of the Eager Lion 19 military exercise.

The Jordanian military's connection to the retirement center runs deep. Not only are some of the residents former Soldiers, but the director of the center is retired Brig. Gen. Muna Haddadin, former head of nursing in the Jordan Armed Forces (JAF).

Brig. Gen. Muna gave the visiting chaplains and imams a thorough tour of the center, through the residential wings, recreation rooms, kitchen, laundry room and administrative offices.

"The visit of U.S. chaplains was great and made the seniors very happy," she said. "They were especially happy for the gifts and the

singing. It gave residents a sense that people care for them, even non-Jordanians."

Jordanian military imams visit the retirement center weekly as part of their duties and, at the request of a resident, equipped the home with a library.

"I told my counterparts, the chaplains in the U.S. military, that we have something in common and that is humanity," said Sheikh Maj. Shadi Abedat, part of JAF's Directorate of Iftaa. "As human beings, we love to see happiness for all, and we love to provide help to the elderly."

Aside from the obvious charitable value of the visit, U.S. Army chaplain Maj. Scott Speight noted that it mimicked a humanitarian crisis that chaplains might encounter in the real world, if, for example, they met elderly patients in a camp for displaced people.

On another day during Eager Lion, U.S. and Jordanian chaplains visited an Army field hospital to simulate caring for sick and wounded Soldiers.

"We wanted the opportunity to work with imams in a real-world experience," Maj. Speight said. "We had the opportunity to see

things at the retirement home we would never see."

The Golden Age Home, founded in 1979 as part of Jordan's White Beds Society, houses 120 patients of all religions. During Eid al-Fitr in June 2019, His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein visited the patients to check on their care. Ongoing renovations at the home came at the king's request.

The charitable White Beds Society survives, thanks to contributions from the Jordanian government and outside donors. The government covers less than half of the 780 Jordanian dinars it costs to house a single resident each year.

Donations provide much of the center's food, drinks and medical supplies, and the Japanese government provided free industrial-size washing machines and dryers in 2006. Volunteers supplement the 70 staffers that care for the residents 24 hours a day.

"We have many volunteers who bring pastry and gifts to them daily, which gives the seniors a huge lift to lighten their days," Brig. Gen. Muna said. "Inside the home, we live as one family."



— the use of information-related capabilities to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp the decision-making of adversaries while protecting one's own. The culmination of those duties at Eager Lion was a leaflet drop by a Royal Jordanian Air Force crew.

“Working with coalition forces, it’s a great feeling to see all these nations busy as bees defending and countering any threat that attempted to disrupt the operation.”

~ Iraqi Lt. Col. Samer Emad

Such old-school technology remained relevant in the fight against Daesh, when terrorists disrupted internet, television and radio communication in the Iraqi and Syrian towns they occupied. Leaflets alerted residents to upcoming battles, encouraged them to expose terrorist hideouts and steered them away from war zones.

Cyber preparedness was given special emphasis at Eager Lion, too. In fact, Soldiers from Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait and the U.S. got a real-world lesson at the exercise. The team was preparing to launch its cyber drill, when the JAF Cyber Incident Response Team detected — and eliminated — an attempted malware breach of their computer system.

Jordanian and Qatari special operations troops storm an oceangoing ferry in a drill at Eager Lion. CPL. KEVIN PAYNE/U.S. ARMY

“This exercise has also increased the understanding and increased the degree of tolerance between our military forces. We have been able to focus on social barriers and on the commonalities, not the differences, and what brings us together not what differentiates us.”

*~ Jordan Armed Forces Brig. Gen. Mohammad Al-Thalji,
director of joint exercises and training*

**A Jordanian Soldier
parachutes from a plane
during a friendship jump.**

JORDAN ARMED FORCES



A member of the cyber team — Iraqi Lt. Col. Samer Emad — expressed satisfaction that participants from five nations managed to unify their procedures to stop malicious attacks. “Working with coalition forces, it’s a great feeling to see all these nations busy as bees defending and countering any threat that attempted to disrupt the operation,” Lt. Col. Emad said.

A Senior Leader Seminar that convened toward the end of Eager Lion 19 allowed commanders from nearly 30 nations to think strategically about security issues afflicting the region and the world. The main topics were cyber security, defending against chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and ballistic missile attacks and countering extremist ideology.

Despite spectacular victories against Daesh fighters in Iraq and Syria, Jordanian officers urged their multinational partners to stay alert to any terrorist resurgence.

Jordanian forces continue to thwart attempts to smuggle weapons and drugs into the country, including explosives hidden in pomegranates, a Jordanian officer said during a presentation. “JAF was acting as the first line of defense in denying Daesh access to the region,” he said.

Daesh has moved into a “reconstruction

phase” in which members retreat to desert and mountain hideouts to await redeployment, he said. Thousands of Daesh adherents remain in the region.

Information technology gives terrorists advantages they didn’t have decades ago, he said. The so-called mujahedeen in Afghanistan in the 1980s needed weeks to transmit propaganda through traditional media, but Daesh can trumpet its misdeeds in minutes through social media.

Jordan will host Eager Lion once again in 2021, giving would-be participants extra time to organize and commit troops to the exercise. After several years hosting the exercise, Gen. Al-Thalji will hand the reins to another commander because he accepted a promotion to command Jordanian forces in the northern sector of the country.

“This exercise has also increased the understanding and increased the degree of tolerance between our military forces,” Al-Thalji said. “We have been able to focus on social barriers and on the commonalities, not the differences, and what brings us together not what differentiates us.”

Eager Lion 19 showcased participant nations’ resolve to confront any adversary bent on dominating the Middle East or forcing its ideology on the region. ♦

A Royal Jordanian Air Force crew drops leaflets during an information operations drill.

SPC. SHADRACH HICKS/
U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

EMPOWERING

THE

AFGHAN AIR FORCE



Blackhawk helicopter pilots develop their skills to support ground troops and combat terrorism

LT. JACK MCCAIN, U.S. NAVY
PHOTOS BY U.S. NAVY

Stumbling off the C-17 at Kandahar Airfield in May 2018 was likely the most jarring experience of my military career. Up to that point, I had been deployed to three places as a helicopter pilot: the Pacific and Indian oceans and the Arabian Gulf. While embarking on this, my fourth deployment, the experience was wholly new and deeply different from anything I had done before.

I was the only officer from the U.S. Navy assigned to the 441st Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron in Afghanistan. I was a winged aviator who had significant helicopter experience at sea, but little or no experience flying in deserts and mountains. That made my presence in Afghanistan all the more challenging and the object of endless humor in the squadron.

For a year prior to my departure — thanks to a program called Afghanistan Hands — I and other U.S. military personnel were trained in the history, culture, politics and economics of Afghanistan and received intensive instruction in one of the languages spoken there. The hope was to build a cadre of advisors who could forge better relationships with their Afghan counterparts and inform the U.S. military on how to improve its advisory role with the Afghan military and government. When I first stepped foot in Kandahar, it became my job to train and advise



the officers and crews of Afghanistan's first UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter squadron.

After a short period of adjustment and orientation to local flying conditions, I began to instruct new aviators in how to fly and fight with the Blackhawk. The goal was to build a capable, professional and sustainable squadron. I encountered eager, intelligent and thoughtful young officers, all of whom wanted to make a difference. After a few flights, it was difficult not to be impressed by the skill and determination of pilots who came from every corner and culture of Afghanistan and were striving daily to make themselves combat ready.

Aside from simply flying the aircraft, pilots in the Blackhawk squadron have extensive duties. Each pilot was assigned a specific role that he had

Lt. Jack McCain, left, poses in front of an Afghan Blackhawk with Maj. M. Salim, the pilot he helped train to fly the helicopter.



An Afghan pilot
flies a Blackhawk.

to develop from scratch. For instance, the pilot assigned as tactics officer had to sit down with his U.S. advisor counterpart and devise standard operating procedures to address the unique challenges of the operating environment of southern Afghanistan. This role would challenge even the most seasoned aviator, much less one so new to the aircraft. It was in this role that I first met Maj. M. Salim.

Maj. Salim was no stranger to operating in Kandahar, Helmand and Uruzgan provinces when I started as his advisor. In fact, he had been flying out of Kandahar for more than seven years, logging thousands of combat hours in the rocket-armed Mi-17 helicopter. He had flown in some of the hottest spots, supporting Afghan ground forces through air assaults, medical evacuations, close air support, logistics and transport. He was one of the first Afghan pilots I was fortunate to fly with, and we built an excellent working relationship. He is eager, quick-witted, well educated, humble and committed to the continued professionalization of the Afghan Air Force to help secure a peaceful future for his country.

There was never a moment in which I failed to see him working on a way to improve his squadron or assisting and inspiring his fellow pilots. I was even more fortunate to notice his fearlessness in the face of grave danger, exhibiting personal bravery and a care for the ground forces' well-being, constantly keeping in mind the contributions made by the Blackhawk to troop success and safety. He models the best qualities of the Afghan Air Force, and was keen to share some of his insights with *Unipath*:

Lt. McCain: What part of Afghanistan are you from?

Maj. Salim: I am from Panjshir. I was born in Kabul, but when the Taliban took Kabul, I went to Panjshir with my family for safety.

Lt. McCain: What makes the Blackhawk special?

Maj. Salim: We have more helicopters than we have ever had before in the Afghan Air Force. After we received the UH-60, it brought a significant change to the battlefield. Now we can evacuate casualties and support our ground forces anywhere they need it. The Blackhawk is good for the Afghan Air Force for two main reasons: First, it is easy to get any parts for the Blackhawk that we need, thanks to U.S. support and a good logistics system. Second, the Blackhawk is a very useful airframe for the Afghan Air Force because it more than replaces the Mi-17. It burns less fuel than the Mi-17 and is an incredibly maneuverable helicopter, with speed capabilities faster than that of the Mi-17, giving its crew more safety and enabling more rapid mission completion.

Lt. McCain: How will the new helicopters help secure the future of the Afghan Air Force?

Maj. Salim: I am confident that the Blackhawk will help the

Afghan Air Force more than the Mi-17 has. As it stands today, the program is already on its feet and growing quickly, enabling us to support our ground forces flexibly. As we train more pilots and have more aircraft in more places, we will be able to sustain and support any mission required for the peace and stability of Afghanistan.

Lt. McCain: How has the squadron contributed to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan?

Maj. Salim: It has improved the morale of our troops by guaranteeing them evacuation if they are wounded and providing them consistently with supplies. But even more deeply, the support shown through the incorporation of the Blackhawk has helped reinforce the notion that the fight against extremism and terrorism is not just the duty of Afghanistan, but that of the United States and every nation.

Lt. McCain: What are your hopes for the future of the Afghan Air Force?

Maj. Salim: I want what every pilot wants — more air power and more airframes. I also want to continue the partnership with the United States and its allies to continue to train pilots and maintenance personnel and to help ensure we are successful in our continuing fight against terrorism. I have seen huge progress since I began flying for the Afghan Air Force but realize there is more work to do.

Lt. McCain: Describe your training and the opportunities it has opened up.

Maj. Salim: I did my initial pilot training in the C-208 and MD530 at Shindand Air Base, then proceeded to the Mi-17 and now am flying the UH-60. I was trained by the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Army and one U.S. Navy instructor, and that training has given me the opportunity to serve my country, and now, to help train young pilots to fly on the battlefield. I have also been afforded an education and the ability to fly high-performance aircraft, which is quite an adventure.

Lt. McCain: What does serving your nation mean to you?

Maj. Salim: I am very proud to serve my nation; however, I do not just fight for my own nation, but to help the people of the world to live in peace, free of terrorism. It has been the great honor of my life to do so and to continue to do so.

Maj. Salim has risen to Blackhawk squadron commander at Kandahar Airfield and continues to fly and fight for Afghanistan. He also helps develop a professional, capable and sustainable Afghan Air Force by training pilots and maintaining the high standards instilled by his advisors. He has completed over 2,000 combat hours and countless missions in support of Afghan ground forces. ♦

Unity

ON THE SEAS



Royal Navy of Oman ship Al Shamikh and the Pakistan Navy ship Shamsheer steam in formation beside guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy during IMX 19.

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS MICHAEL LEHMAN/U.S. NAVY

THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME EXERCISE IN BAHRAIN DRAWS 5,000 PARTICIPANTS FROM 50 COUNTRIES

UNIPATH STAFF

Thousands of Sailors from dozens of nations joined forces during the International Maritime Exercise (IMX 19). Their mission was to sharpen their skills in countering a series of real-world threats by removing underwater mines lurking beneath sea lanes, intercepting criminals smuggling cargo aboard civilian vessels and protecting harbors from enemy attacks.

Dubbed one of the largest naval exercises in the world — second only to the Rim of the Pacific Exercise near Hawaii — IMX 19 mustered naval forces that stretched from the northern Arabian Gulf near Kuwait, looped around the Arabian Peninsula, brushed the Horn of Africa into the Red Sea and ended in the Jordanian port of Aqaba.

Countries with a large naval presence in the region, led by the United States and the United Kingdom, combined forces with regional navies to display global resolve in maintaining freedom of navigation in some of the world's most strategically important sea lanes.

Such cooperation started at the top. One of the commanders of Saudi Arabia's Eastern Fleet — Rear Adm. Abdullah Al Shammari — served as deputy commander of IMX 19. Two other senior regional naval officers assumed command of two of the three task forces during the exercise: Omani Rear Adm. Ali Musa Al Belushi of Task Force South and Emirati Col. Musbah Rashid Al-Mehari of Task Force North.

Adm. Abdullah noted that IMX 19 benefited participants in two phases, starting with academic training ashore and advancing to practical drills at sea. The overall exercise lasted from October 21 to November 12, 2019.

"Such exercises have positive repercussions on our naval forces in unifying tactical concepts of command and control with the rest of the world's navies as well as raising the level of combat capability of the Saudi Royal Navy," Adm. Abdullah said.



Saudi Rear Adm. Abdullah Al Shammari, deputy commander of IMX 19, greets U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Commander Vice Adm. James Malloy.

PFC. BENJAMIN CASTRO/U.S. ARMY

IMX originated as a multinational exercise in 2012 specifically dedicated to minesweeping, but the mission expanded in 2019 to include broader maritime security. Nevertheless, a large component of IMX 19, particularly the activities of Task Force North in the Arabian Gulf, entailed clearing shipping lanes of underwater explosives.

IMX 19 planners planted simulated mines on the approach to regional harbors and ordered coalition forces to locate, identify and disable them. Helicopters and surface ships conducted sweeps that detected suspected mines, leaving it to divers and underwater drones to investigate more closely. Before the end of the exercise, Sailors had eliminated a majority of the mines.

Vice Adm. James Malloy, commander of

U.S. Navy Central Command and the U.S. 5th Fleet based out of Bahrain, expressed appreciation to the more than 50 countries that provided naval personnel for the purpose of addressing threats in the region.

At least 5,000 personnel; 40 vessels; 34 visit, board, search and seizure teams; 17 aircraft; and 18 explosive ordnance disposal teams engaged in IMX 19.

“This makes it the largest coalition exercise ever conducted in this region,” Adm. Malloy said from aboard the Japanese mine countermeasures support ship Bungo, where he addressed admirals and ambassadors from the region.

Adm. Malloy emphasized that mines are potential problems for ports around the world, and that each coalition partner makes unique contributions to maritime security.

The USS Normandy hosts Pakistani Sailors during a drill at the exercise.

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS
MICHAEL LEHMAN/U.S. NAVY



IMX19

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME EXERCISE

2ND

LARGEST
MARITIME
EXERCISE IN
THE WORLD



5000+

PERSONNEL



34

VISIT, BOARD,
SEARCH &
SEIZURE TEAMS



7

INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS



50+

NATIONS

17+

AIRCRAFT



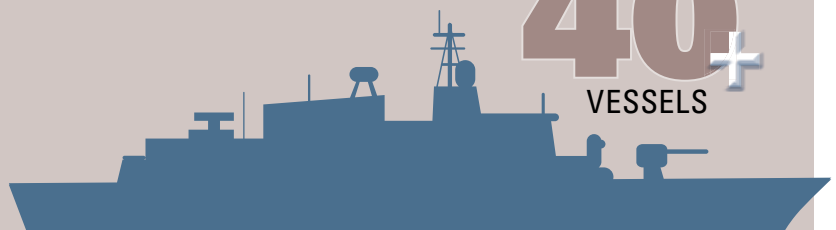
18

EXPLOSIVE
ORDNANCE
DISPOSAL
TEAMS



40+

VESSELS



Source: U.S. Navy

UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION

“Over time we develop a series of best practices. ... In this region Bahrainis know the bottom of the water better than anybody else. So when we come here, the Bahrain Navy tells us how to conduct daily routines. Everybody walks away learning something about how other people do it better,” the admiral said.

Sailors also confronted real-life challenges that added tension to their tasks during IMX 19. A tropical cyclone spun through the Arabian Sea, narrowly missing a multinational flotilla gathered off Oman. Choppy seas in the northern Arabian Gulf increased the risk for divers trying to locate underwater mines, while real-world actors continued to pose threats to international shipping in the same waters occupied by IMX 19 participants.

Task Force North enlisted ships and Sailors from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. Task Force South, based out of the Omani Maritime Security Center, drew participation from Omani, Pakistani and Yemeni maritime forces. Task Force West operated in the African nation of Djibouti and in the port of Aqaba, where Jordanian and Egyptian forces took part.

The officers controlling the exercise from command posts on the naval base in Bahrain

were equally multinational. In a cluster of tents, naval teams sitting at computers and leaning over nautical charts fashioned scenarios by which exercise participants fended off aggression from a fictional enemy.

Though it didn’t provide any ships, the Iraqi Navy sent a team of officers to participate in IMX 19. The Iraqis benefited from a complementary command post exercise on shore that gave officers experience running complex naval operations.

“We are looking forward to continuing participating in future joint exercises and events that aim to broaden experience and develop capacities among partners,” said Iraqi Navy Lt. Col. Mustafa. Al-Ruba’i, the country’s senior representative to the U.S. 5th Fleet.

A critical part of IMX is cooperation to ensure safe passage of merchant vessels. A program called Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping aids communication between merchant ships and naval vessels in tense regions such as the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Gulf. Exercise commanders got daily briefings about the progress of nonmilitary ships within their areas of responsibility, including container ships, tankers and luxury ocean liners.

Ships participating in IMX 19 steam in close formation.

PFC. BENJAMIN CASTRO/U.S. ARMY





IMX 19's success was the fruit of 18 months of planning and preparation. As an example, Cmdr. Simon Cox was in charge of the British battle staff aboard Cardigan Bay. During normal operations, the ship supplies British minesweepers with food, fuel and ammunition. During the exercise, the ship became a base for dive teams from 10 different nations.

"Mines remain a threat. A mine costing relatively little can inflict damage far beyond its cost," Cmdr. Cox said.

A guided-missile cruiser, USS Normandy, played a similar leading role in the Gulf of Oman. It spent most of the exercise sailing in formation with the Royal Navy of Oman ship Al Shamikh and the Pakistan Navy ship Shamsheer. The Normandy hosted visit, board, search and seizure

drills for assault teams from those countries.

"Exercises like this are pivotal to developing strong partnerships with regional nations, USS Normandy Commanding Officer Capt. Christopher Stone said. "Through exercises such as IMX, we enhance the ability to ensure the free flow of commerce throughout the region."

Saudi naval forces maintained a large presence at IMX 19, reflecting the country's need to defend long coastlines from potential enemies in the region.

"The Saudi Navy's participation in this international exercise reflects the devotion of the Royal Saudi Navy command to strengthening international relations and sustaining joint work with the rest of the world," Rear Adm. Abdullah said. ♦

**Royal Navy of Oman
Sailors execute a
visit, board, search
and seizure drill on
the USS Normandy.**

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS
MICHAEL LEHMAN/U.S. NAVY

NO HAVEN FOR DAESH

DR. HUSSEIN ALLAWI, PROFESSOR OF NATIONAL SECURITY, NAHRAIN UNIVERSITY



IRAQI AND COALITION FORCES DESTROY A TERRORIST STAGING GROUND ON AN ISLAND IN THE TIGRIS RIVER

PHOTOS BY THE IRAQI COUNTER-TERRORISM SERVICE

Remnants of Daesh tried to create a haven on an island in the Tigris River, a platform from which to launch attacks against innocent Iraqis. Thanks to the efforts of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) and its partners in the coalition forces, the Daesh resurgence was extinguished.

The village of Qanus is 30 to 40 kilometers north of Salah al-Din governate's Shirqat district, separating it from the Nineveh governate. Qanus Island, or Zur Qanus, about 10 kilometers north of the village, is an uninhabited tract of reed beds, surrounded by the Tigris River on all sides, leading residents to call it an island.

Qanus Island was not fully secured following the liberation of northern Iraq. Notably, after the Battle of

Baghouz in Syria, Daesh attempted to deploy its remaining fighters to entrench themselves in areas with natural impediments to accessibility.

The remnants of Daesh had numerous auxiliaries in the area and took advantage of the geography and dense vegetation to hide and carry out attacks against Iraqi security forces and civilians. The area is also strategically located at a crossroads with access to Kirkuk, Diyala, Salah al-Din, Anbar and Nineveh governorates.

Great heroes pursued victory on Qanus Island and envisioned the end of the fight against Daesh. The village of Qanus, with its vast river island, suffered under the control of the Daesh. Footage of international coalition airstrikes exposed the high mobility of the Daesh remnants who imagined that they could continue to



CTS troops conduct operations against Daesh in 2019.



Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service troops secure a perimeter during Operation Burning Flame against Daesh.

operate, regroup and threaten the security of our dear cities, particularly in the liberated regions of Nineveh and Salah al-Din. Indeed, this strategic operation is evidence of the depth of the partnership between coalition and Iraqi security forces in combating terrorism.

CTS Commander Gen. Talib Shaghathi Alkenani provided the planning and follow-through for the operation executed by heroic officers and valiant fighters. With the additional backing of Army Aviation and the coalition's advanced F-15 and F-35 aircraft, the ground shook under the feet of the Daesh fighters within their so-called safe haven. The command and control of CTS, with the support of Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, provided the psychological underpinnings of operations striking at new staging grounds Daesh sought to establish in riverine regions of Iraq.

CTS provides the resolve for tracking down and drying up new sources of terrorism, a strategy that allows us to live in safety.

Counterterrorism forces learned the lessons of the fall of Mosul on June 10, 2014. The battles of liberation provided our security forces with considerable experience in combating terrorism and dismantling the newly formed networks.

In the aftermath of the terrorist organization's loss of military hideouts and amidst a 92% drop in funding, a 96% decline in recruits, and the inability of a crumbling Daesh to generate 87% of its media products, terrorists began targeting civilian life of small towns in liberated areas. The remnants of Daesh continued to send spurious dispatches expressing support to their vanishing and crumbling leadership in a flight to the desert. They were left with nothing to do but wait for the buzz of advanced aircraft picking them off with smart bombs and destroying the caves and tunnels they had dug in a belief that the deep reconnaissance of Iraqi CTS forces and the international coalition's reconnaissance aircrafts would not discover their whereabouts.

Organization, training, and access to state-of-the-art advances in the counterterrorism



CTS troops take action during Operation Burning Flame.

field, along with experience-sharing and visits made by CTS, have rendered it a highly capable force worthy of the respect of the people and the government.

Its success story began with a single man and great leader — Gen. Alkenani — who came first in everything, and whose vision and distinctly patriotic Iraqi roots are reflected in the institutional work required to create the large institutional structure of the Counter-Terrorism Service, a service based on patriotism and professionalism as the standard for affiliation, institution building and combat. In this way, the CTS has continued to serve unwaveringly, thinking only of citizens and country, safeguarding the hard-fought victory achieved through the noble blood of martyrs.

The time has come for Iraq to build a comprehensive national counterterrorism strategy based on drying up the sources of terrorism and economic and human development. Terrorist organizations such as Daesh have become akin to dead weeds scythed by the sickles of the Iraqi forces advancing upon them with vigor, resolve and might. ♦

UZBEKISTAN

as Security Partner

The country's Military
Establishment Promotes
Cooperation to Tackle
Central Asian
Security Challenges

SALTANAT BERDIKEEVA





The May 16, 2018, visit of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the United States was historic: It was the first time that any Uzbek president had traveled officially to the U.S. since 2002. President Mirziyoyev's meeting with his U.S. counterpart, Donald Trump, marked not just normalization of bilateral ties, but also deepening of economic, social, cultural, military and security relations. President Mirziyoyev characterized the meeting with President Trump as a start of a "new era of strategic partnership" between the countries. The diplomatic exchange culminated in the signing of a five-year bilateral military cooperation agreement.

The improved relationship was summarized by U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan Daniel Rosenblum at a news conference in Tashkent in July 2019. "The U.S. is interested in deepening its security partnership with Uzbekistan, including countering terrorism and combating drug trafficking," Ambassador Rosenblum said. "This means not only working together to ensure peace and prosperity in Afghanistan, which is a common goal, but also cooperation to combat violent extremism, transnational crime, drug trafficking and other threats."

A New Partnership

Since the beginning of 2019, Uzbekistan has made important breakthroughs to strengthen ties with the U.S. military. In February 2019, then-Commander of U.S. Central Command Gen. Joseph Votel paid an official visit to Tashkent to participate in a conference of the chiefs of the general staff of armed forces in Central and South Asia. The conference, organized by CENTCOM, was held in Tashkent for the first time. President Mirziyoyev said it served as a platform to discuss and develop joint approaches to solve one of the worst conflicts in the region — the war in Afghanistan. The meeting between Gen. Votel and President Mirziyoyev emphasized the importance of expanding Uzbek-American military cooperation, which included assisting Uzbek Armed Forces with military education, training military technical specialists, and collaboration between military and security forces of the two countries.

President Mirziyoyev expressed his hope to boost the combat capability and readiness of his country's Army with the help of American specialists, according to the Asia Times online newspaper. Although details of such cooperation are



not disclosed, Uzbek political analyst Rafael Sattarov believes that it implies modernization of special forces, acquisition of new types of weaponry and ammunition for the country's special forces and border patrol officers, and equipping the Armed Forces with armored vehicles. Both countries also reportedly discussed educating Uzbek cadets in U.S. military schools.

U.S. President Donald Trump shakes hands with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan in Washington, D.C.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

In early 2019, Uzbekistan took another important step to boost military ties with the U.S. Between January 13 and 31, 2019, Uzbek special forces participated in military exercises called Southern Strike jointly with the U.S. National Guard at the Camp Shelby military post near Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and at a training center in Gulfport in the same state. According to a statement by the Uzbek Defense Ministry, such exercises "support military preparedness and cooperation between military forces of the U.S. and its key allies." It was the first time that Uzbek special forces were part of joint military exercises on U.S. territory. As part of this training, an Uzbek delegation, headed by then-Defense Minister Abdujalom Azizov, met with American military leaders in Mississippi in January 2019, and officials at the CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa, Florida, in the U.S. to discuss security

issues in Central Asia, opportunities for further cooperation with the U.S. military, and future joint and international military exercises.

Under the leadership of President Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan began partnering with military and educational organizations and instructors in the U.S. Gregory Gleason, professor of security studies at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (a partnership between the German Ministry of Defense and the U.S. Department of Defense) began teaching a course on international security at the Academy of the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan. Professor Gleason now conducts regular workshops for faculty and students of the academy. A senior lieutenant of Uzbek Armed Forces reserves, Makhmud Abbosov, noted that because instruction in military educational institutions in Uzbekistan is still based on the material from the Soviet era, “the [Uzbek] Army needs modern methods [of teaching] and experiences.”

The closer ties between Uzbekistan and the U.S. in recent years have also yielded economic benefits for both sides. A year after starting his presidency, Mirziyoyev held a series of bilateral meetings with representatives of American companies in New York during his visit to the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2017. These meetings resulted in investment agreements in the oil and gas industry, machine building and civil aviation worth \$2.6 billion.

According to Alice Wells, the U.S. State Department’s deputy assistant secretary for South and Central Asia, the U.S. has tripled the amount of financial assistance to Uzbekistan, from \$10.1 million in 2016 to \$28.1 million in 2018. Uzbek authorities pointed out that more than 160 American companies have invested \$600 million in the country over the past few years. In turn, Uzbekistan expressed its

readiness to contribute to the American economy by reducing its gold reserves and buying U.S. treasury bonds instead. The volume of bilateral trade doubled in 2018.

Uzbekistan as Peace Broker

American diplomats and military leaders increasingly consider Uzbekistan an essential regional ally and a peace broker in Afghanistan. A new U.S. congressional caucus on Uzbekistan held a meeting in Washington in February 2019, where a representative from Texas vouched for the strategic significance of Uzbekistan. Created at the initiative of President Mirziyoyev in November 2018, the caucus planned to hold meetings twice a year to discuss how to advance Uzbek-American relations.

An agreement between the U.S. and Uzbekistan to jointly coordinate the peace-building process in Afghanistan appears to be at the core of the renewed American interest in Uzbekistan. Uzbek and U.S. diplomats have held a series of political consultations on how to bring peace to that country. Washington recently approved Tashkent’s role as a political negotiator to end the conflict in Afghanistan. Uzbek officials played an important role in trying to build dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

Ismatilla Irgashev, special representative of the Uzbek president to Afghanistan, commented recently that all of his country’s actions toward Afghanistan adhere to one overarching principle — the ongoing conflict is a problem of the Afghan people, which must be resolved by Afghans themselves under Afghan leadership without undue interference from other countries. According to Irgashev, this approach allowed his country to gain the trust of all political factions in Afghanistan, including the Taliban. Given its latest



The U.S. began selling MRAPs to Uzbekistan in 2014.

SGT. KYLE C. TALBOT/U.S. MARINE CORPS

initiatives to serve as a peace negotiator in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan gained more credence in the U.S.

Uzbekistan is also economically vested in Afghanistan. It is implementing large infrastructure projects in Afghanistan, such as the Mazar e-Sharif-Herat railroad and Mazar e-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railroad. Uzbekistan vowed to increase economic assistance to Afghanistan for 2019.

Roots of Uzbek-American Cooperation

Improvement in relations between Uzbekistan and the U.S. in recent years is part of a dramatic change of Tashkent's domestic and foreign policies, spearheaded by President Mirziyoyev. Since 2016, he opened up his country to the world and strengthened relations with numerous global and regional players. For the first time in decades, Uzbekistan has improved its interactions with neighbors in the region, attracted more foreign investments and tourists, and reinforced ties with strategic allies, including the U.S.

Uzbek-American cooperation began in the 1990s, shortly after Uzbekistan achieved independence from the Soviet Union. While the 1990s were marked with economic cooperation between the two countries, military partnership commenced in 2001, after the U.S. dislodged al-Qaida and other terrorists from Afghanistan. In 2001, Uzbekistan agreed to open a military air base in Khanabad for American troops to support military operations in Afghanistan. The air base hosted more than a 1,000 U.S. personnel alone. Between 2005 and 2009, relations between the two countries suffered a setback after closure of the U.S. air base, following domestic problems in Uzbekistan.

Uzbek-American military cooperation improved during President Barack Obama's administration, cooperation that was transactional and pragmatic. U.S. forces won the right to use Uzbek territory to deliver nonmilitary supplies to international troops in Afghanistan through the Northern Distribution Network (a transit route that goes through several countries in the former Soviet Union, including Uzbekistan). Tashkent benefited from joint military exercises and new military equipment from the U.S. In 2012, an American military and diplomatic delegation to Uzbekistan agreed to supply modern equipment and weapons to Uzbekistan, including "mine detectors, body armor, satellite navigation equipment, night vision devices, small arms, unmanned aerial vehicles, and attack helicopters." By 2013, 70 percent of American cargo destined for forces in Afghanistan passed through Uzbekistan, although the volume of deliveries has decreased since then.



U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas Bergeson, U.S. Central Command's deputy commander, center right, welcomes Gen. Maj. Bakhodir Nizamovich Kurbanov, minister of defense of Uzbekistan, to CENTCOM headquarters in July 2019.

SGT. RODERICK JACQUOTE/U.S. MARINE CORPS

In 2014, the U.S. began selling Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs) to Uzbekistan, including armored repair and recovery units to support them. Touted for their resilience and ability to survive mines and improvised explosive devices, these vehicles would significantly boost the resilience of Uzbek Armed Forces. Within two years, Tashkent received 308 MRAPs and 20 repair units worth about \$150 million.

In 2018, President Mirziyoyev issued a presidential decree to deepen the bilateral military partnership. However, such cooperation did not envision reopening an American air base in Uzbekistan. According to Navbahor Imamova of the Voice of America, American officials have not ruled out the possibility of providing more equipment if Tashkent asks for it, since Washington is interested in Central Asian border security and fighting cross-border drug trafficking.

Placing his country's interests first and staying true to Uzbekistan's long-standing commitment to conduct its foreign policy free from pressures of regional players, President Mirziyoyev has stepped up his country's relations with the U.S. to the next level. Fully aware that terrorism, extremism and radicalism are long-term threats to Central Asia, Uzbekistan is likely to maintain and strengthen its partnership with the U.S.

President Mirziyoyev's efforts to make Uzbekistan a serious regional player and a peace negotiator in Afghanistan are likely to strengthen confidence in Tashkent. The U.S. appears to have finally regained an important strategic partner in Central Asia after years of uncertainty. ♦



Soldiers and civilians work together at the National Center for Security and Crisis Management during Eager Lion.

JORDAN ARMED FORCES

A COORDINATED RESPONSE

Jordan's National Center for Security and Crisis Management Brings Together Military and Civilian Agencies

UNIPATH STAFF

Planning for crisis management before it strikes is the best way to recover from disasters and overcome security threats. Experiments prove that lack of coordination may lead to casualties, friendly fire, and perhaps death of the injured due to the lack of timely arrival of rescue crews, which leads to great confusion among state agencies. Therefore, it is essential to have a higher authority for crisis management to organize the movement of first responders and arrange communication between civilian agencies and security forces. The National Center for

Security and Crisis Management (NCSCM) in Jordan, established in 2005, showed off its capabilities during role playing at Eager Lion 19 that included participation from Jordanian Prime Minister Omar Al Razzaz. *Unipath* spoke with the center's chief of training and joint exercises, Col. Nedal Jamahneh.



Col. Nedal Jamahneh

Unipath: How successful was Eager Lion in helping civilian and military agencies cooperate and function as a team?

Col. Nedal: Let me speak about the National Center for Security and Crisis Management in general and its role in managing the efforts of our nation's agencies. The center is a comprehensive national umbrella that unifies institutional efforts whether they are security agencies, the public sector, the private sector or the military. The nation has many elements of strength: economic, political, security and military. The center's strategic role is to support the Armed Forces with the nation's resources to enable them to achieve their objective and overcome any difficulties during military operations. However, the reverse role happens if we have internal security threats or crises, the military will provide support to the rest of the nation's security forces and civil institutions to overcome

II bin Al Hussein's vision in establishing the NCSCM was to eradicate the problem by acting as a national umbrella focused on closing the gap among government institutions and unifying efforts. Based on the NCSCM vision, the center established a committee to study and analyze all threats that could face the kingdom in the future. After identifying the threats, we devised strategic plans to prevent or eliminate them. We have plans for countering terrorist attacks, dealing with masses of refugees and recovering from catastrophes. Included in each plan are specific roles for governmental agencies based on the type of crisis. The strategic plan was distributed to all agencies to allow them to integrate their specific mission sets and responses within the master plan. Thank God, we haven't experienced a full-blown crisis since we established the center, but we have responded professionally, with full cooperation of security agencies, to a few events.

Unipath: Please share details of some of these events?

Col. Nedal: Well known are the Salt and Karak counterterrorism missions. In addition, we recently had a flash flood that affected large portions of the kingdom. The NCSCM declared it a crisis and dealt with it at the national level. We don't claim to be free of errors, but the field of crisis management almost always involves casualties. We had about 20 casualties but after declaring a national crisis, we were able to reduce the impact and damage. In fact, if we didn't declare the flooding a national crisis and use national resources, the casualties would have been worse. The response from governmental entities was almost instantaneous. I will give you good example about how we operated during that crisis. His excellency the minister of interior was here and next to him was the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the director of civil defense. The team belonging to the Ministry of Interior on the ground needed an evacuation helicopter, and its request reached the minister. He simply turned to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and requested a helicopter. Within minutes the evacuation helicopter was on its way.

Unipath: How does your partnership with U.S forces bolster your expertise?

Col. Nedal: The idea for the center emerged in 2005, and we finished building it in 2013. Therefore the actual age of our center is about five years. If we're discussing a U.S center for crisis management like the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), their experience goes back many decades.

The National Center for Security and Crisis Management is a comprehensive national umbrella that unifies institutional efforts whether they are security agencies, the public sector, the private sector or the military.

the crisis. We operate across society and focus on comprehensive security. For example, if we experience a shortage in strategic supplies that could reduce food security in the kingdom, we must act swiftly and preemptively to prevent a crisis; this is what I meant by comprehensive security. Therefore our center's name reflects our role. Comprehensive security comes first, then managing any crisis. We manage crises whether they are man-made like terrorist attacks or natural disasters like earthquakes or floods.

Unipath: Crises always present a challenge regarding which agencies should coordinate as first responders. How can the NCSCM manage such a challenge?

Col. Nedal: This is the core role of our center and the reason for its existence. Let me mention a serious crisis known to the public. In 2005 our nation suffered an unprecedented terrorist attack, when terrorists attacked hotels in Amman. A review of that national crisis concluded that each agency worked perfectly well by itself but found gaps in cooperation when interagency work was demanded. Therefore, His Majesty King Abdullah

There are several ways to learn, whether you learn from your mistakes or benefit from a partner that already has vast experience in the field. Thank God we don't have a real national crisis, so we reached out to our strategic partner, the United States, to learn from its experience, like FEMA and other institutions in the U.S. Armed Forces and agencies. We enjoy a great relationship with our partners in the U.S., especially the state of Colorado — we have cooperation agreements with the Colorado National Guard. In addition, we work with the U.S. State Department's Anti-Terrorism Assistance program as well as other cooperative programs available to us with the aim of building national capacity. Today I can confidently say we are reaching the stage of standing and walking by ourselves, thanks to the great efforts of our strategic partners.

Unipath: Describe in more detail the challenges of unifying civilian and military efforts during a crisis.

Col. Nedal: Based on my military background and now my crisis management position, I would like to give you my insights. Many leaders remain unaware of the humanitarian aspect that is critical to any military operation. For example, during operations, the Armed Forces faced internally displaced people (IDP) who fled the conflict zone

— which is normal in any military operation. If we don't deal with IDP carefully and professionally, they will become a problem that hinders military operations and threatens mission objectives. When civilians are trapped in a crossfire because of terrorists entrenched in the area, the terrorists will try to exploit the situation and hide among civilians with the goal of blaming the government if innocents are harmed. It helps terrorists to recruit. As a result, instead of being loyal to their government, local citizens may side with the terrorists. This scenario could occur if we mismanage the military and civilian operation. In addition, the international community is responsible for providing humanitarian assistance to civilians in conflict zones, especially in joint operations as practiced in the Eager Lion exercise. In this year's exercise, we have a scenario involving IDP and a group of individuals who want a peaceful end to the conflict. These groups need assistance that can't be provided by Jordan alone, but by international organizations like the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the World Health Organization, and the World Food Programme. These organizations specialize in helping refugees and internally displaced people across the world, and they have to arrange and work through local governments, not with military or security forces.

Jordanian rescue teams search for missing people near Madaba during deadly floods in late 2018. The crisis center helped coordinate the effort.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





U.S. and Jordanian special operation forces conduct a multinational airborne operation, also known as a friendship jump, with eight other countries to conclude exercise Eager Lion 19. SAMANTHA LEWIS/U.S. ARMY

The government will arrange such activities on the strategic level with the security forces that hold the ground. The national center is the entity tasked with communicating among international organizations, local government and the military. We have liaison officers from all ministries and government agencies, and they provide support and recommendations to the commander of the crisis center. Our unofficial motto is “the commander knows something about everything, whereas the expert knows everything about one thing.” That is the reason we have experts and liaisons to advise and to communicate with their headquarters at the commander’s request.

Unipath: You mentioned that the Jordanian prime minister arrived today to declare a crisis as part of Eager Lion training. How does that process work?

Col. Nedal: We work on three levels in the center: tactical, operational and strategic. The tactical level is where the first responder is capable of solving the problem. Let’s say we have a traffic accident or an isolated flood where the first responder is a civil defense or police agency that was able to solve the problem without need of additional support. In this case, our role is to monitor and assess the situation and provide advice and recommendations. But if the event reaches a higher level and the first responder requests support from other agencies within the province, it reaches the operational level. In this case, each province’s security council, which includes general security, the gendarmerie, civil defense and the health directorate, will try to solve the situation with provincial resources. If the province can’t manage the problem alone — or if the nation is facing multiple events simultaneously — we elevate it to the strategic level. The role of the national center is to convey a recommendation to his excellency the prime minister to convene a meeting at the national center to decide whether to declare a crisis. I would like to mention that the national center management consists of the prime minister, the minister of interior, the commanders of all security forces, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the chairman of NCSCM, His Royal Highness Prince Ali bin Al Hussein. They are in charge of declaring a crisis.

Unipath: How does the NCSCM communicate with the citizenry to eliminate rumors and chaos during crises?

Col. Nedal: We operate a media response unit within the national center that works in parallel with operations. Inside the media unit, we have liaisons from all media outlets in the nation. Our goal is to

unify messaging during the crisis. Because today’s media tend to sensationalize events if they’re not privy to the correct information, keeping them informed will reduce the impact of crises. Therefore the role of this unit is to communicate with spokespeople for the government, security agencies, civil defense and 84 other spokespeople. For example, if we face a situation at the tactical level like the spread of disease in an isolated area and we detect social media spreading rumors and misinformation, we immediately contact the spokesman of the Ministry of Health to issue a statement to diffuse rumors before chaos ensues. We use information that comes from ministries and agencies down range and communicate that to our citizens. We have direct contact with Jordanian television, radio stations and electronic media. In terms of social media, we monitor the media environment and

The national center is the entity tasked with communicating among international organizations, local government and the military. We have liaison officers from all ministries and government agencies, and they provide support and recommendations to the commander of the crisis center.

give initial reports to the operations staff or the NCSCM vice chairman to evaluate the necessity of issuing official statements by our spokesman. Our primary goal is to unify the official media message. Our messages are transmitted in the form of infographics, short videos, tweets and WhatsApp texts.

Unipath: In the Karak terrorist attack, the terrorists spread misinformation to their sympathizers. How do you expose their lies on social media?

Col. Nedal: We have to take the lead by providing information to our people. But sometimes it’s very sensitive to talk about it, like during a hostage situation in which any statement could risk the lives of innocents or disrupt rescue operations. We counter the rumors by providing the truth to the public. Local citizens trust the government, and once we provide the information to the public, our citizens will spread and amplify our message on the street and in social media. That counters the adversary’s narratives. ♦

WEATHER'S ROLE *in* WARFARE

*Afghan special operations forces rely on meteorologists
to ensure mission success*

STAFF SGT. HOSSEIN RAHIMI
CHIEF OF METEOROLOGY, AFGHAN SPECIAL MISSION WING 777

Each country's weather is intimately correlated to its terrain and geographical location, determining not just clothing, housing and food styles, but also the type of warfare conducted there.

As in much of Central Asia, Afghanistan's mountainous terrain dictates that military campaigns will often be fought using guerrilla tactics dependent upon the whims of weather. Military operations traditionally perk up with the onset of spring and wind down with the return of winter cold.

The meteorological department of Afghanistan's Special Mission Wing 777 is responsible for scrutinizing and forecasting the weather, a particular concern for these special operations aviators responsible for safely deploying Afghan National Army Special Operations Command and General Command of Police Special Units.

With the increasing accuracy of weather forecasts in the Special Mission Wing, traditional Afghan warfare is changing. Terrorists have come to realize that climactic conditions no longer offer them safe cover as they suffer repeated defeats and casualties.

NATO forces, especially those of the United States, have played an important role in the transformation of the Afghan Armed Forces, improving performance with advanced, deployable, professional, technical capabilities to deal with any threats. The enemy's realization that it has no hope of military victory has compelled them to seek a solution at the negotiating table.

ORIGINS

The Bureau of Meteorology was established in 2017 to aid the special mission wing in predicting the best times for flying. Before that time, such forecasting was provided by American personnel.

Building professionalism and self-sufficiency among Afghan security forces is one of the goals of U.S. advisors, so in 2017 I was selected to serve as chief of meteorology for Special Mission Wing 777.



Staff Sgt. Hossein Rahimi, chief meteorologist with Afghan Special Mission Wing 777, tracks the weather with his staff.

AFGHAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

I received basic meteorological training in India and advanced training from U.S. experts at Camp Eagle in Afghanistan. Before I took the job with special operations, I had served with the regular Afghan Air Force. Thanks to my American colleagues, I recently attained a master's degree in meteorology.

U.S. consultants have provided accurate meteorological materials and shared their skills with their Afghan colleagues, offering training in the use of advanced meteorological radar and websites.

For Afghan forces, the U.S. advisors are a blessing. Every day Afghan and American forecasters meet to share meteorological data that, once consolidated, produce an accurate picture for military decision-makers.



Two Special Mission Wing Mi-17s approach a landing zone. AFGHAN SPECIAL MISSION WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

IMPORTANCE OF FORECASTING

Special air operations are most often nocturnal, and during daylight operations, meteorological calculations must be accurate to the minute to ensure the successful deployment and exfiltration of special operations troops.

The clearness of the skies, the presence or absence of moonlight and wind speeds play vital roles in the execution of specific operations. If the meteorological data are slightly unfavorable, the operation may fail.

Special operations missions usually last from 20 minutes to two hours, a period in which we could lose all forces if spotter aircraft and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance teams are unable to guide the ground forces.

And the movement of troops by air requires that we pay close attention to the speed and direction of winds. Severe

winds can play havoc with such operations, and, since Afghanistan's terrain is mostly mountainous, the enemy often hides in valleys sheltered on both sides by peaks.

Peculiar to many of these valleys, winds shift and intensify depending on whether it's day or night, and it's essential that helicopter pilots get detailed reports to complete their missions safely.

Cloud cover is another variable that threatens aerial operations. Clouds increase the chance that special operations troops can be attacked by the enemy, and routes through the mountains are subject to air turbulence and other life-threatening weather phenomena.

The route from Kabul to Mazar-e Sharif has always been a challenging one for pilots, passing as it does the 3,365-meter-high Mount Salang. So receiving precise meteorological information for flight operations is crucial.

A CASE STUDY

Meteorological data play a daily role in Afghan military operations, but one success story stands out.

In 2018, when Kunduz was besieged by the enemy, a group of senior Ministry of Defense commanders was determined to fly to the province to assess the situation. The weather was terrible for two days, and it was impossible for all types of aircraft to fly.

A helicopter-borne rescue mission for the besieged forces reached Salang Pass north of

Kabul and contacted the meteorological office to request a detailed weather report to complete the trip toward Kunduz.

Forecasters told the commanders that if they didn't depart from the mountain range during a two-hour window of milder weather, they might be stranded two more days. In such an event, the besieged forces would likely be overrun.

The helicopter pilots took advantage of this information to race the senior commanders and supplies of ammunition to the endangered troops in Kunduz.

The improved performance of Afghan special operations forces is largely attributable to the hard work and dedication of our international partners. The Armed Forces and the noble people of Afghanistan owe a debt of gratitude to the United States and its friends. ♦

Operation SENTINEL

*A global partnership to
deter maritime aggression*

UNIPATH STAFF



Mine countermeasures ship USS Devastator navigates the Arabian Gulf as part of Operation Sentinel. SPC. TERRELL SHERMAN/U.S. ARMY

Attacks on shipping in the Arabian Gulf have provoked a defensive response from a naval coalition consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Albania.

Those coalition partners used the opportunity of the International Maritime Exercise in Bahrain to launch Operation Sentinel in November 2019. Sentinel will engage dozens of naval vessels in a mission to protect commercial vessels from security threats near strategic waterways such as the Strait of Hormuz.

mission in response to a demonstrated threat,” the admiral said. “All of the coalition partnerships forged over the last 20 years in the region have made it possible to stand up this deterrent force in such a short time.”

Multinational patrols began in June 2019 after attacks on ships and harbor installations in the Gulf. Operation Sentinel will enlist frigates and destroyers to ensure smooth passage through chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb, and rely on smaller, speedier ships and aircraft to patrol sea lanes between those chokepoints.

Sentinel differs from the Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) in that it’s meant to deter state actors, not nonstate actors as the CMF does. CMF focuses mostly on stopping pirates, smugglers, terrorists and other criminals.

British Royal Navy Cmdr. Ben Keith said Operation Sentinel could grow or shrink in size depending on the threat level. He envisioned a staff of 60 to 80 officers, a large percentage from the Gulf region, to help coordinate the task force’s activities.

“It’s not designed to be an enduring operation,” Cmdr. Keith said. “It’s designed to be scalable.”

Naval commanders also hope to attract greater multinational participation in the task force. Adm. Malloy announced that the door was wide open to new members “in any capacity.” In November 2019, NATO-member Albania heeded the call and joined Sentinel.

“Our commitment to the region is not short-lived,” Adm. Malloy said, “it’s long term.” ♦

In a ceremony to establish Operation Sentinel’s command center, U.S. Vice Adm. James Malloy said the task force would “shine a light on malign activity” to deter maritime attacks. It would do so transparently, defensively and nonprovocatively, Malloy said.

“Standing together today shows the power of nations united in support of a common




Bahrain Defense Force Commander in Chief Field Marshal Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, center right, attends the opening ceremony of Operation Sentinel with U.S. Navy Vice Adm. James Malloy, center left. PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS DAWSON ROTH/U.S. NAVY



Bolstering Regional COOPERATION

UNIPATH STAFF

Multinational military exercise focuses on strengthening partnerships

ome threats to regional stability are so dire, they require a coalition of militaries from around the world to help restore peace. Despite barriers in language or military culture, multinational forces must coalesce quickly to accomplish missions and objectives.

With the goal of improving interoperability, nearly 200 military personnel from five countries attended the annual Regional Cooperation exercise organized by U.S. Central Command in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in August 2019.

Regional Cooperation is a multilateral command-post exercise held jointly with partners from Central and South Asia. Since the exercise series began in 2001, its setting has rotated annually among several countries.

This year's event was hosted by the Tajikistan Ministry of Defense and included participation from Uzbekistan, Mongolia and the United States, with a representative from Pakistan sent as an observer. It focused on improving

multinational stability operations with an additional emphasis placed on procedures for improving operations civil-military interactions.

Gen. Maj. Mirovar Khushbakht Mirshakar, first deputy chief of the general staff of the Tajik Armed Forces, praised the professionalism of the multinational forces during the exercise.

"We are completely sure that this exercise, Regional Cooperation 2019, will serve as a launching pad for the development of the overall cooperation of the military, as well as other areas to promote stability in the region and stability in our countries," Gen. Maj. Mirshakar said during the closing ceremony.

Events began with several days of academic instruction to ensure the success of the subsequent command post exercise. Soldiers from the four participating countries needed to function as a staff of a joint multinational brigade. Translators worked to bridge communication between the Russian- and English-speaking participants.

“Our collective efforts toward regional and global security and stability, including border incursions, crisis management and terrorist attacks, recognize no boundaries and remain a driving force behind the exercise.”

– Guy Zero, U.S. Central Command's deputy director of exercises and training

“It's very educational. Everyone has something to teach, and everyone here has something to learn,” explained U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Richard Weeks, lead planner from U.S. Central Command. “That gave everyone a good base to start from. Once we began actually running the exercise scenarios, everyone came together to find solutions and form a well-functioning military staff.”

The exercise scenario was based on security challenges stemming from two fragile, newly formed countries. Ethnic tensions and competition for resources led to increased regional violence — so much so that the United Nations mandated the creation of an international peacekeeping force. A coalition brigade staff was established to reinforce and stabilize the border zone.

The exercise simulation required intense planning and coordination among participants. The brigade staff dealt with myriad crises: chlorine gas leaks, bombed rail lines, civil unrest and violence, border incursions, and criminals taking advantage of the chaos to smuggle drugs and weapons. Internally displaced people needed humanitarian assistance. Intelligence reports of terrorist threats complicated the situation further.

Col. Anvar Akhmadjonzoda of Tajikistan served as brigade commander for the exercise. Tajik forces learned to overcome obstacles to conducting peacekeeping operations outside the



Officers from Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, the United States and Mongolia listen to a briefing on the first day of Regional Cooperation 2019. SPC. ASHTON KOLLER/U.S. ARMY



Service members from Tajikistan, the U.S. and Uzbekistan collaborate on a mission plan.

SPC. ASHTON KOLLER/U.S. ARMY



borders of the country, he said. One challenge his staff had to overcome were differences in military decision-making processes among the countries.

“Tajiks, Mongols, Pakistanis, Uzbeks and Americans all have the same goal here, but various approaches and paths to a solution,” Col. Akhmadjonzoda said. “During an exercise like this, we are gaining experience, and we are finding common ways to solve problems.”

U.S. Col. Ken Wisniewski III, who served as one of Col. Akhmadjonzoda’s deputy commanders, said the exercise was a valuable learning experience for his troops from the Massachusetts Army National Guard. The exercise extended far beyond just sharing tactics, techniques and procedures.

“The U.S. Soldiers are gaining an opportunity to learn about the Central Asia region, its culture, geography and history. We are also

building important relationships with the forces from the other participating countries,” Col. Wisniewski said.

U.S. Central Command’s Deputy Director of Exercises and Training Guy Zero thanked Tajikistan for hosting the exercise

and expressed appreciation to all the participants of Regional Cooperation 2019. By sharing information and improving interoperability, each country becomes stronger and better prepared to respond to and overcome threats.

“Our collective efforts toward regional and global security and stability, including border incursions, crisis management and terrorist attacks, recognize no boundaries and remain a driving force behind the exercise,” Zero said. “These destabilizing issues remain regional threats and a worldwide challenge that requires all of our continual efforts.” ♦

Tajik Army Maj. Said Khomushov, left, and Uzbek Army Lt. Col. Valijon Sattorov devise an intelligence plan.

SGT. JENNIFER SHICK/U.S. ARMY



Col. Anvar Akhmadjonzoda, Regional Cooperation 2019 brigade commander

SPC. ASHTON KOLLER/U.S. ARMY

COUNTERING TERRORISM



Maj. Gen. Hussein Al-Hawatmeh Promotes Professionalism as Director General of Public Security of Jordan

UNIPATH STAFF
PHOTOS BY JORDANIAN
GENDARMERIE DIRECTORATE

Being in command of a strategic force capable of striking terrorism with an iron fist, tackling those who seek to undermine national security, and maintaining the confidence of the leadership, subordinates and beneficiaries of security services requires an individual with deep-rooted military and security experience. This is why the Jordanian leadership's choice in 2019 of Maj. Gen.

Hussein Mohammed Al-Hawatmeh for the post of Director General of Public Security of Jordan was prescient.

In that role, Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh also serves as director general of Jordan's Gendarmerie Forces (known as Darak). He possesses the personal qualities of a commander, deep knowledge of security matters and the proven ability to make sound decisions in the most difficult of circumstances. His leadership is admired by members of Darak as a result of his continuous communication with officers and noncommissioned officers. Within a short period, he has ensured Darak forces are a model of discipline and efficiency, able to handle security incidents with total professionalism.

Under his leadership, the Darak gained the trust and admiration of Jordanians in short time. According to recent surveys conducted by the Jordanian government, 94% of Jordanians surveyed expressed confidence in Darak, a lofty percentage rare for law enforcement bodies around the world.



Maj. Gen. Hussein Al-Hawatmeh

Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh spoke to *Unipath* about his leadership role model, from whom he learned a great deal in the course of his military career:

"His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein, supreme commander of the Jordan Armed Forces, is my leadership role model. I had the honor of serving under him when I was commander of a special operations company and His Majesty was overall commander of special operations at that time.

"I learned the art of leadership from His Majesty, which begins with good relations, humility and kindness to Soldiers, and listening carefully to their concerns where these exist. I also learned from him composure in difficult situations because a leader must remain calm and in control of his emotions when making important decisions, and I am honored to have learned these qualities from His Majesty."

Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh's military career has benefited from unparalleled security and military experience. He graduated from the Royal Jordanian Military Academy in 1985 and joined the ranks of the Jordanian special forces, a service in which he rose from lieutenant to brigadier general. During this period, he served as commander of a parachute regiment, an intelligence officer, commander of a special forces battalion, and commanding officer of a commando unit.

During his career, he attended several courses and training programs, the most important of which was a special forces course in the United States. He also obtained a master's

Jordanian Gendarmerie Forces practice formations before a mission.



degree in strategic planning and international security from the National Defense University (NDU), in addition to serving as military attache in Pakistan for two years. During a stay at U.S. Central Command, he represented the Jordan Armed Forces as senior national representative.

Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh vouches for the importance of trust and friendships as the basis for building strategic partnerships.

“The United States is an important country for Jordan, and we feel close to the American people. I personally went to the United States when I was 20 years old. I lived among them and got to know them well, and I saw the true friendship and generosity of the American people. This made my subsequent work with them enjoyable. We shared the same way of thinking and working, based on dealing honestly and respectfully with allies.

“My experience of them showed me that they respected the value of honesty even if there was a difference of opinion. My relationship with them was therefore good and based on mutual honesty and respect for others. As for the nature of the relationship between our two countries in general, I am a military man and do not like to go into politics, but at the strategic level our relationship with the American side is a strong strategic partnership based on mutual trust and cooperation, and they are real allies in contributing to reinforcing security and stability in the region.”

Practical experience gained in the field with coalition forces has been a boon to the Jordan Armed Forces, the general said.

“Military and security operations beyond borders, such as peacekeeping operations or training activities between armies and allied and friendly forces, bring new expertise to the Armed Forces and security services. These days, modern wars are no longer conducted as they were historically between warring armies.

“Warfare is now nonconventional and characterized by fighting the forces of evil and terrorism. These are security operations aimed at preserving security and stability, ending civil conflicts and protecting innocent civilians.

“Our broad international participation in this field has given commanders and Soldiers a great deal of expertise in dealing with terrorist groups within cities, especially as terrorist gangs around the world now work together in coordinated fashion and learn from their experience.

“Therefore, our international experience with our allies, especially the Americans, has given us greater capability in preventing similar attacks — God forbid — in Jordan, as well as how to work and interact in a multinational environment where we share experience and know-how and international best practices.”

Being in command of a strategic force in a volatile region requires nerves of steel and the ability to manage both work and family commitments.

“I spent most of my military life as a special forces officer, so I had no time for rest because all my time was spent working and training, and I did not have any major problem reconciling work and family,” he said.

“From the beginning, my family got used to the nature of my work, and as you know, special forces members have missions that require constant travel. Of course, pressure and responsibility increased after I took command of Darak. But I believe that organizing one’s time and carrying out work as part of a daily regimen enables a person to lead a normal life.”

In addition to his leadership skills, intelligence and ability to work under pressure, Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh is known for performing good works and meeting the needs of the citizens and residents of Jordan with a magnanimity that inspires trust and respect. The heartfelt story of an Iraqi young lady is emblematic of the general’s character.

A young Iraqi female was stranded in Jordan after her mother died in one of the country’s hospitals. She had no relatives or other sources of support to help with transferring her mother’s body, funeral arrangements and burial. Desperate, the girl appealed for help on Facebook.

Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh leapt to action with great chivalry by ordering Darak forces to arrange the funeral. They provided a dignified service befitting a guest of Jordan. When the story appeared on social media — and was subsequently broadcast by news agencies — it became a source of pride for Arabs throughout the region.

In the eyes of Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh and the Jordanian leadership, the country’s military and security forces must think strategically about tackling future threats and adjust training and development to reflect those threats.

“While we are highly prepared for the present, we look to the future constantly. We have to be ahead of the enemy, and if we anticipate the nature of future security challenges, we will be able to put in place appropriate plans and scenarios to meet and overcome them,” the general said.

“We monitor terrorist activities in the region, we track terrorist movements and techniques and undergo training in how to defeat them. Technology is the greatest challenge to security thinking, because these are tools available to terrorists and can be used to mount attacks on civilian installations and innocent people. One example is the accelerated development in the use of remote-controlled aircraft. This places a huge burden on the security forces to find ways

to neutralize such challenges.”

Technology is only as good as the people wielding it. The general places an absolute priority on developing human resources. It even takes precedence over the acquisition of modern equipment. His vision includes deemphasizing customary top-down, centralized leadership in favor of training young officers to seize the initiative in the field.

“Development begins with manpower, because equipment and devices are easily available once the material capabilities are present. Developing the human element requires a great deal of time and effort along with sound planning,” he said. “My main goal is to develop and prepare leaders capable of leading security operations without being beholden to centralized decision-making.”

“*While we are highly prepared for the present, we look to the future constantly. We have to be ahead of the enemy, and if we anticipate the nature of future security challenges, we will be able to put in place appropriate plans and scenarios to meet and overcome them.*”

~ Maj. Gen. Hussein Mohammed Al-Hawatmeh

The general also stresses a code of professional ethics that includes adhering to the law at all times and treating people humanely in the field.

“This is the essential condition for achieving professionalism,” he said. “In other words, we do not hesitate to impose security when required, and we have the necessary means to do this, but we adhere to ethical constraints when dealing with civilians.”

Maj. Gen. Al-Hawatmeh urges the younger generation of officers to stay abreast of modern security challenges that will shape the course of their careers.

“You are the future leaders, and you must develop yourselves professionally and cognitively,” the general said. “You should remember that you are performing a noble mission and important duties in preserving national security, and you must also remember that security in today’s world has become interconnected. It is not possible to separate the security of a particular country from its regional or international environment.” ♦



BROTHERS IN ARMS

Jordanian Forces Attend a Joint Exercise Focused on Coastal Defense in the United Arab Emirates

JORDAN ARMED FORCES, DIRECTORATE OF MORAL GUIDANCE
PHOTOS BY JORDAN ARMED FORCES

The importance of carrying out the Jordanian-Emirati joint exercise Strong Stance 1 lies in highlighting joint action among closely allied countries to confront any external threat. This 2019 exercise reflected the depth of friendly relations between two countries linked by fraternity — the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the United Arab Emirates — and the extent of the solidarity and military and security cooperation between them.

The importance of this exercise also lies in strengthening military relations and putting the concept of joint action into practice, in addition to planning, managing and executing joint operations and raising the level of combat effectiveness and operational and logistical capabilities. Joint exercises

also have the ability to send messages to the enemy that the countries involved have strong, highly combat-effective armed forces and powerful allies capable of dealing with all risks and circumstances.

The exercise was characterized by professionalism, cooperation and seriousness on the part of all. It was completed in various stages that achieved the objectives in record time, an indication of the participants' professionalism. From its commencement, the exercise and the troop arrival stages achieved success in strategic transport, which demonstrated the capabilities and competencies of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in that field.

The exercise focused on combat in built-up areas as one of the complex environments considered to be a future threat. In line with the operational environment in which the exercise was conducted, coastal defense was a highlight and demonstrated the professionalism and ability of participants to apply the most important lessons of coastal defense via defensive preparations and the use of barriers and fire coordination. During these operations, participants demonstrated the highest level of readiness, speed and accuracy of execution.

His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein of Jordan and His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin

His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein of Jordan, center left, and His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed of Abu Dhabi, center right, observe the exercise.



Zayed of the UAE visited the training site to affirm mutual cooperation and the strong, brotherly ties between the two countries. The king and his son, the Jordanian crown prince, were welcomed by Sheikh Mohammed, who also serves as deputy supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces.

King Abdullah and Sheikh Mohammed listened to a brief on the events of the exercise, which included various joint training using medium and heavy weapons. These activities demonstrated participating forces' combat skills, quality of training and qualifications, in addition to the high level of understanding and compatibility in the implementation of joint military operations. The two leaders also toured the built-up area used in the training. They then paid tribute to the participants, and King Abdullah affirmed the extent of cooperation and relations between the two countries.

In his remarks, the king expressed deep thanks and appreciation to the armed forces of both nations participating in the exercise for the excellence they showed in conducting the exercise. He commended Sheikh Mohammed for the support he provided to achieve this convergence of the two armies.

"All thanks and respect from me and from my brother Mohammed bin Zayed regarding the excellent training we saw today. It has been our hope for years that Emirati troops and Jordanian troops would be shoulder to shoulder," King

Abdullah said. "Thank God that this has come true and we have seen it today. And this is a message not only to the people of our two brotherly countries but also to the region and the world that we stand together in one trench against any challenge we face together.

"God willing, we will see you every year either in the UAE or in Jordan. I reiterate my thanks to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who has brought the Emirati Army closer to the Jordanian Army."

For his part, Sheikh Mohammed stressed the importance of cooperation between the two countries and the depth of their relationship. "Our ties have deep roots, our cooperation is firm and robust, and our forces are ready, effective, and able to work together for the stability of the region and to counter various threats," Sheikh Mohammed affirmed.

Strong Stance 1 is the result of the historical and strategic relations between the two countries in general and between the Jordan Armed Forces and the UAE Armed Forces in particular. The watchwords for the exercise were working side by side, performance synergy, complete preparedness and high-level coordination. This excellence did not emerge out of nowhere, nor was it conducted on the spur of the moment. Instead, it arose from the wise leadership of both countries, which makes an impact and bears fruit on the training field. ♦



Guarding the Nation

LT. GEN. HASHIM AL-RIFAI HAS DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF IN IMPROVING THE KUWAIT NATIONAL GUARD

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY KUWAIT NATIONAL GUARD

Unipath welcomes a distinguished leader who serves as the under-secretary of the Kuwait National Guard. Lt. Gen. Hashim Al-Rifai is keen to enhance the role of this institution to become the primary support group for the country's military and civilian institutions. The National Guard has multiple roles and is honored to safeguard national security in cooperation with the military, police and other agencies. Appreciation for Lt. Gen. Al-Rifai's forces came from none other than His Highness Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who described the National Guard as "one of the key pillars which the security and defense of the nation depends on" and praised its "honorable duty in preserving and maintaining the security and stability of this beloved nation in cooperation with your brothers in the military and the police, which is appreciated and cherished by all."

Unipath: As commander of the Kuwait National Guard, please describe its duties and responsibilities in the country.

Lt. Gen. Hashim: The idea behind the establishment of the Kuwait National Guard arose in 1967, during the reign of the late Kuwaiti Emir His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah while he was crown prince. The idea became reality through Decree-Law



No. 2 of 1967, issued on November 6, 1967, which established the Kuwait National Guard under the reign of the late Emir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al- Salem Al-Sabah. Since its inception, the National Guard has been headed by Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah and his deputy, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

According to this decree, the National Guard is independent of the military and the police, and enrollment is carried out through voluntary enlistment of citizens. It is entrusted with supporting the Armed Forces in defending the land of Kuwait and safeguarding its freedom and independence. It assists public security agencies in maintaining Kuwait's security and protecting the home front.

Since the time of the decree, National Guard forces have received the full support, care, and attention of the political leadership, so that they fulfill their duty to defend the homeland against all those who may possibly defile its sacred soil, maintain security and stability. These forces protect the home front against any threat and to secure vital facilities and state agencies and maintain readiness to carry out any other task assigned to them, in conjunction with the military, police, general directorate of civil defense and the Supreme Defense Council. The National Guard plays a constructive role in society.



Lt. Gen. Hashim Al-Rifai poses with international partners upon the Kuwait National Guard's induction into the International Association of Gendarmeries and Police Forces in 2019.

Unipath: Your excellency has many achievements during your military career. Please name a few that hold the most meaning to you.

Lt. Gen. Hashim: I had the honor to join the National Guard in 1988 as an engineering officer with the rank of first lieutenant. I was the first engineer to join the National Guard at that time and was among those who introduced modern systems for administrative and logistical support. I contributed to the development of the armament system based on up-to-date technology during the period (2005 to 2007) when I was chairing the Armament Committee in the Kuwait National Guard. I helped equipped the Kuwait National Guard with state-of-the-art equipment and tactical vehicles and equipment, and that represented a qualitative step in this organization's journey.

On March 2, 2010, I assumed the position of commander of military indoctrination and sought to enhance military training curricula, activate simulated training systems and introduce a computer literacy certification program called the International Computer Driving License. The training system witnessed a remarkable improvement due to the modern techniques that were introduced, including e-learning and the introduction of modern information systems.

I moved to the staff and operations units command of the National Guard on September 9, 2012, where I, along with fellow commanders and in coordination with ministries of defense and interior, played a major role in developing the defense plan for the country and establishing fundamental

pillars of the National Guard's military doctrine as well as developing operational and combat readiness and manpower reports for the National Guard. I led the National Guard security system workgroup, through which we embarked on an expansion project and opened new camps in line with the state's expansion plan, helping the National Guard to be present in all regions.

On January 1, 2015, I was honored, by the confidence of the National Guard leadership represented by my superiors Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, commander of the National Guard, and Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, lieutenant commander of the National Guard, to assume the position of undersecretary of the National Guard. I, along with fellow leaders, continue to assist the National Guard in making giant leaps in military, administrative and technical matters.

Among recent achievements is the Kuwait National Guard's induction into the International Association of Gendarmeries and Police Forces with Military Status. This allows us to exchange experiences with pioneering countries in the field of security, counterterrorism and crisis management.

Unipath: How has the Kuwait National Guard benefited from joint military exercises with security forces beyond Kuwait?

Lt. Gen. Hashim: Without a doubt, joint military exercises enhance bonds of partnership and relations among countries,

promote exchange of experiences and help build capacities. Joint exercises have advanced combat capabilities and readiness. We focus on developing joint action among participating forces to achieve maximum benefit. During the exercises, we are keen to assess our performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, and draw lessons learned. At this time we are preparing for the Eagle Resolve exercise with friendly and brotherly countries that include the United States.

Unipath: Kuwait is one of the strongest strategic allies of the United States. How would you describe the current relationship and partnership between the two countries?

Lt. Gen. Hashim: The United States of America is a strong ally and a strategic partner for Kuwait in various fields, especially military and security. A striking example of this partnership was the stance the United States took in 1990 in defending Kuwaiti rights when our country was subjected to a brutal invasion. What affirms the depth of Kuwait's relations with the United States of America is the presence of thousands of Kuwaiti students in universities in the United States. Also, recent years have witnessed the presence of many American universities in Kuwait.

Unipath: What are the features of the strategic development plan for the National Guard titled "Strategic Objectives Paper 2020?"

Lt. Gen. Hashim: The National Guard Strategic Plan (2020) was launched by His Excellency National Guard Deputy Chief Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah under the

slogan "security first," and it pursues a national dimension that protects the sovereignty, legitimacy, constitution, people and values of the state of Kuwait by maintaining security and stability and supporting national defense and security plans and objectives to translate the lofty vision of His Highness the Emir of Kuwait and the Chief Commander of the Armed Forces to advance Kuwait as a financial and commercial center.

The National Guard strives to achieve maximum military, security, administrative and technical readiness

As for the plan's vision, it is to strive for excellence in security and military operations and institutional governance through high-quality leadership, competence and full readiness for a highly professional force.

The document included a set of key values: belonging, loyalty and patriotism; military superiority in the sphere of specialization and readiness; and justice. It also included a number of sections outlining vital mission and preparedness; strengthening combat readiness; upgrading mechanized and armored vehicles, weapons and ammunition; raising levels of inspection; surveillance; advancing technical readiness; reinforcing infrastructure and expanding bases and warehouses; and improving health services through establishing medical clinics specializing in the needs of National Guard personnel.

Other sections deal with improving capabilities, including building a helicopter unit and providing whatever it needs to carry out its missions like specialized training and qualification tests. Another part deals with activating a chemical and radiological monitoring center, expanding the scope of military and technical research and studies related to energy and other matters, and training anti-terrorist and riot brigades.



The National Guard responds to a weather emergency.

Details of the 'Security First' Strategic Plan

THE NATIONAL OBJECTIVE

Protect the sovereignty, legitimacy, Constitution, people and values of Kuwait by maintaining security and stability and supporting national defense and security plans and objectives.

VISION

Strive for excellence in security and military operations and institutional governance through high-quality leadership, competence, and full readiness of a highly professional force.

KEY VALUES

- Belonging, loyalty and patriotism.
- Military superiority in the sphere of specialization and readiness.
- Justice.

STRATEGIC PLAN PILLARS

1. Critical tasks and readiness.

- Enhance combat readiness.
- Develop machinery, armor, weapons and ammunition.
- Raise inspection, oversight and quality levels.
- Upgrade technological readiness.
- Strengthen infrastructure and infrastructural requirements and develop camps and stores.
- Upgrade the preparedness of health services and establish specialized health clinics needed by the National Guard.

2. Enhancing overall support and new capabilities.

- Establish and develop a helicopter unit and equip it effectively.
- Develop a military security unit and establish mechanisms to operationalize its support role.
- Develop a specialized training and certification system for the helicopter unit.
- Activate the Chemical Defense and Radiological Monitoring Center.
- Expand the scope of military and technical energy-related research and studies.
- Develop and train counterterrorism and anti-riot battalions and reinforce them with the necessary and appropriate tools and means.
- Increase the efficiency and capability of the Government Support Unit, and expand its services.

3. Activating operational management, planning, training and crisis management roles.

- Review manpower, equipment and training requirements, and continue to develop training schools, curricula and exercises.
- Develop the operations center and finalize its requirements.

- Develop and review planning and operations.
- Increase joint training with the ministries of Interior and Defense and the Fire Service Directorate.

4. Increasing administrative and institutional readiness.

- Enhance the regulatory environment.
- Develop systems and procedures.
- Develop technological services and information technology systems.
- Activate the ranks and responsibilities within the organizational and functional structure and the force management system.
- Activate the military certification and training system.

5. Strengthening the role of counseling, increasing institutional competitiveness and upholding social and environmental responsibility.

- Promote the positive image and standing of the National Guard in the community.
- Strengthen institutional linkage with affiliates of the Guard, increase institutional loyalty and empower institutional values.
- Formulate a National Guard media policy and expand the joint framework with the state apparatus.

6. Enhancing joint military and professional cooperation.

- Operationalize the signed cooperation protocols and expand the scope of military cooperation.
- Adopt the Global Languages Program (English, French and German).
- Attract global military expertise and expand military consultations.
- Increase skill exchanges and foreign partnerships through conferences, training and visits.



PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS MICHAEL LEHMAN/U.S. NAVY

INTERCEPTING IRANIAN ARMS

UNIPATH STAFF

The discovery of sophisticated Iranian weaponry aboard a Yemeni dhow in February 2020 replicates a pattern of Iranian arms smuggling that has enflamed violence in the Arabian Peninsula.

A boarding party from the U.S. Navy guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy intercepted the dhow in the Arabian Sea and seized an arms cache destined for the Houthis in Yemen.

The illicit arsenal — which included 150 anti-tank guided missiles — violated a United Nations Security Council embargo on supplying weapons to Houthi leaders and their representatives. Among the seized weapons were surface-to-air missiles, thermal imaging scopes for launching nighttime attacks, and components for unmanned aerial and surface vessels. The anti-tank missiles appeared to be Iranian-made versions of Russian Kornet missiles.

“The Houthis have used these Iranian-designed systems to conduct lethal attacks against civil, commercial and military targets on the Arabian Peninsula,” said U.S. Navy Capt. William Urban, chief spokesman for U.S. Central Command.

The weapons bore the markings of other Iranian armaments seized over the years, including an arsenal discovered on a dhow by the U.S. Navy destroyer USS Forrest Sherman

on November 25, 2019. That confiscation included advanced weaponry, such as land attack cruise missile components, 13,000 blasting caps and high explosive warheads.

The illegal cargos fit a historical pattern of Iranian arms smuggling that has stoked conflict in and around Yemen for at least five years, Capt. Urban said. He cited the attacks on Saudi Aramco plants in Saudi Arabia in September 2019 and the deaths of Egyptian fishermen when their boat struck a Houthi mine in the Red Sea in February 2020.

“There is no doubt to where these weapons came from or where they were going,” Capt. Urban said of the latest arms caches seized by Sailors.

The U.S. 5th Fleet, based in Bahrain, is responsible for maritime security operations in the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden. Ships like the USS Normandy conduct patrols to preserve freedom of navigation and deter and catch smugglers, pirates and terrorists.

During the International Maritime Exercise in November 2019, the USS Normandy conducted visit, board, search and seizure drills with Sailors from Pakistan and Oman, two countries that have supplied ships to multinational naval task forces in the region.



Repatriating Tajiks From War Zones

UNIPATH STAFF

Tajikistan is focusing on reintegrating citizens who renounced their previous involvement with ISIS and other terrorist groups, particularly women and children.

As of mid-2019, the country had repatriated about 300 citizens, including 84 Tajik children returned in April from Iraq, where their fathers died or disappeared and their mothers were serving prison sentences.

President Emomali Rakhmon floated the possibility of repatriation and reintegration for people who renounce illegal armed conflict abroad and have committed no other crimes. Most of these returnees would be granted exemption from criminal prosecution for their activities abroad.

To avoid recidivism, the government has tasked police and



Tajik women and children await their fate in an Iraqi court in 2019.

RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

neighborhood committees with keeping tabs on the returnees. President Rakhmon stressed that the goal is to establish comprehensive measures to immunize citizens — including the offspring of ISIS brides — from involvement with violent extremist groups.

The repatriated children were placed with relatives who agreed to be their legal guardians. Some of the older returnees were enlisted by the Tajik government to warn fellow citizens about joining brutal terrorist groups like ISIS.

The European Union has announced that it would provide financial help to countries dealing with large numbers of foreign fighters and their families. Such aid would provide for reintegration programs and other social services.

As of September 2019, Kazakhstan had repatriated about 600 ISIS family members and Uzbekistan about 100, according to the U.S. State Department.

Sources: Sodrugestvo, Radio Ozodi, Civil Society Development Association, Counter Terrorism Committee of Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan Boosts Cooperation with U.S.

UNIPATH STAFF

Kazakhstan hosted several delegations of U.S. officials in the summer of 2019, discussions meant to build on the two countries' cooperation in matters of security, trade and investment.

In a meeting with Kazakhstani President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on August 9, 2019, in Nur-Sultan, two members of the U.S. House of Representatives emphasized Kazakhstan's importance in strengthening stability and security in Central Asia and Afghanistan as well as fighting international terrorism.

Later that month, U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political

Affairs David Hale arrived in the Kazakhstani capital to meet the foreign ministers of all five Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Although the meeting covered common security, economic and environmental issues in the region, Hale paid close attention to bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and the United States. In the wake of President Nursultan Nazarbayev's sudden resignation in March 2019, representatives of both countries issued reassurances that political, security, trade and investment

agreements reached between Nazarbayev and U.S. President Donald Trump in January 2018 would continue to be honored.

Building on that momentum, Hale and Kazakhstani Prime Minister Askar Mamin discussed deepening trade and economic cooperation.

American analysts stress that President Tokayev is unlikely to change the course of close and warm relations with the U.S. The recent leadership transition provides an opportunity for the countries to draw even closer.

Sources: *The Astana Times*, Kazinform, Zakon.kz, Regnum



Turkmenistan Counters Terrorism

UNIPATH STAFF

Turkmenistan joined other Central Asian states in ratifying the Code of Conduct for the Achievement of a Terrorism-Free World, a United Nations initiative developed by Kazakhstan in 2018.

The document commits Turkmenistan to stopping recruitment of terrorists, eliminating the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, blocking terror financing and stemming the spread of violent extremist ideologies.

Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov signed the agreement during a meeting of the U.N. General Assembly in New York in September 2019.

The code of conduct reflects important elements of numerous U.N. Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 2396, which calls on member states to strengthen border security and pursue criminal justice and information sharing.

Meredov also held bilateral meetings with U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, who praised Turkmenistan's commitment to peace and stability in Central Asia. The General Assembly recently adopted a resolution, written by the government of Turkmenistan, that declared 2021 the International Year of Peace and Confidence.

Deputy Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, head of the U.N. Counter-Terrorism Directorate, met with Turkmen officials to discuss cooperation on implementing the U.N. Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Elena Panova, U.N. resident coordinator for Turkmenistan, confirmed she backs the country's initiative to host an International Conference on Peace, Security and Development in Ashgabat in December 2020. Sources: SNG Today, Turkmenportal, Kabar.kg



Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov of Turkmenistan addresses the U.N. General Assembly in September 2019. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



EGYPT FIGHTS CYBER CRIME

UNIPATH STAFF

Egypt hosted one of the region's premier cyber security conferences in September 2019 under the banner, "Cybersecurity in the Age of Digital Transformation."

The Arab Cyber Security Conference in Cairo is an annual event initiated in 2017 aimed at keeping individuals, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations and private enterprises up to date with the latest security solutions and challenges.

It also raises security awareness through technical discussions and brings together security professionals and organizations from across the Middle East and beyond to work jointly and exchange expertise.

Information security officers attended from Australia, Bahrain, Germany, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In parallel with improvements in counter-terrorism, the Egyptian government is paying closer attention to cyber security, recognizing the growing importance of protecting computer systems from attack by terrorists and other criminals.

To that end, Egypt has held national and international seminars and conferences and has established bodies and institutions aimed at regulating communications and fighting cyber crime.

Source: news-sinaa.com



Iraq Crushes Northern Daesh Remnants

UNIPATH STAFF

In response to popular calls to remove Daesh fighters from villages near the city of Baquba in Diyala governorate, Iraqi security forces conducted a preemptive attack in August 2019 on terrorist remnants in the region.

Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi, the commander in chief, personally oversaw the launch of Operation Will of Victory III to eliminate Daesh pockets not just in Diyala but also in sections of Nineveh governorate.

Ground forces included the Iraqi Army's 5th and 20th divisions, the Commando Brigade, the Joint Operations Command, the Diyala Police Department, federal police and tribal mobilization forces.

In addition to Iraqi ground troops, Iraqi Army Aviation, the Iraqi Air Force and the air forces of coalition partners such as the United States participated in the clearances.

Eleven villages in Nineveh were cleared, and caches of food, paramilitary uniforms, cellphone and bombs were destroyed. Anti-Daesh operations also entailed protecting oil pipelines west of Mosul and clearing nearby mountain ranges such as the Badush and Atshana. Source: Elaph.com

Iraqi quick response forces get ready to storm a house in the Tarmiyah district north of Baghdad in a search for Daesh suspects.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



SAUDI SECURITY FORCES SECURE HAJJ

UNIPATH STAFF

Every year, Saudi Arabia hosts millions of religious pilgrims arriving from all over the world to perform the rituals of the Hajj.

In the Hajj season of 2019, His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef, the Saudi minister of the interior, chaired the Higher Hajj Committee to ensure the safety and security of an estimated 2.5 million visitors.

The World Health Organization (WHO) commended the government of Saudi Arabia for hosting the pilgrimage to Mecca without any health crisis

or disease outbreaks, despite the discomforts of the August heat.

Before the Hajj season, a WHO team visited health care centers and hospitals in Mena, Muzdalefa and Arafat in Saudi Arabia to observe preparations.

Saudi authorities were well prepared to prevent and respond to health risks from such mass gatherings, including heat stroke, food poisoning and communicable diseases, according to a WHO statement.

The rituals of the Hajj proceeded

without incident, a tribute to the preparations of security forces under the supervision of Prince Abdulaziz.

Before the arrival of most pilgrims, troops showcased their training, discipline and equipment at a military parade in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Badr bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz, deputy governor of Mecca province.

Sources: Al Arabiya, World Health Organization-EMRO

Members of Saudi security forces demonstrate skills on the eve of the Hajj in 2019. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Bahrain Drills with Saudi Arabia

UNIPATH STAFF

To raise combat readiness to preempt potential terrorist attacks, the Saudi and Bahraini forces jointly launched two naval exercises: Bridge-20 and Waves-4.

The drills occurred at King Abdulaziz Naval Base, southeast of Jubail, Saudi Arabia, in October 2019.

Bridge-20 and Waves-4 came at a time of tension in the region due to attacks on Saudi Aramco oil facilities in Saudi Arabia and ships in the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. In each case, Iran was a prime suspect.

The two combined exercises aimed to increase the readiness of the two countries' forces to counter terrorist attacks that target oil installations, protect territorial waters in the Arabian Gulf, enhance cooperation and exchange expertise between the Saudis and Bahrainis.

Participants included units from the Saudi Royal Air Force, the Saudi Royal Navy's Eastern Fleet, the Royal Saudi Air Defense Force and the Bahraini Royal Navy.

Sources: Asharq Al-Awsat, elbashayer.com



Emirati Girls Acquire Military Training

UNIPATH STAFF

Although military service for female Emiratis remains voluntary, many female recruits have taken military training classes to demonstrate their love and loyalty to their homeland.

In the summer of 2019, more than 200 Emirati school-age girls took basic and advanced courses to learn military skills such as weapons assembly and disassembly, close quarters combat, marksmanship, first aid, staging and order of movement, logistics, physical fitness and martial arts.

The courses were organized by the Active and Reserve Service Department at Khawla Bint Al-Azwar Military School. The graduation ceremony was attended by several dignitaries headed by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Khalifa Al Nahyan.

The Active and Reserve Service Department has provided summer courses to school-age children who are interested in developing military discipline and leadership skills.

Several girls and their families expressed appreciation to the United Arab Emirates' government and people for allowing them to hone their skills.

Ahmed al-Kaabi, the father of a graduate named Reem, said the course helped his daughter manage her time more efficiently. "Participation in this course improved my daughter's personality greatly," he said.

Aisha al-Ma'amari, mother of graduate Mira Ghazwan, said the training gave her child an appreciation for the sacrifices of military life.

"My daughter, as soon as this course was publicly announced, expressed a great desire to participate. The course has contributed significantly to the refinement of her leadership skills," Aisha said. "In addition, living a military life helped her recognize the great role played by our Armed Forces to sustain security in this country." Source: Nation Shield

Pakistan Acknowledges Need for Cyber Security

UNIPATH STAFF

Pakistan's Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications has announced plans to establish a cyber security authority to combat increasing threats to computer systems on which the country relies.

Information Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui noted that the authority would operate under a comprehensive cyber security policy the country is devising to defend against cyber crime.

According to the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority, more than 50 million Pakistanis have access to mobile phones with high-speed internet access.

Despite the risk associated with increased computerization, Pakistan's economy will benefit from the spread of information technology, Siddiqui said.

The ministry also intends to establish a regulatory body on information technology education to ensure quality and create more jobs for the 25,000 IT graduates Pakistan produces every year.

"My heart goes out to the young generation, and this ministry has been working to spur academic and entrepreneurial growth," he said. "We need to keep pace with the world to generate more employment opportunities and end unemployment. It is technology and quality education which have helped in minimizing poverty."

Regarding cyber threats from foreign and nonstate actors, Siddiqui warned that future conflicts could be cyber based and that Pakistan needs to deter potential attacks.

"The government is cognizant of the security threats and working on a plan to establish a Cyber Security Authority to deal with any such kind of threats," he said.

In 2016, facing an uptick in cyber incidents, Pakistan ratified the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, which included proposals to create, as other countries have, computer emergency response teams.





AIDING AFGHANISTAN BY AIR

UNIPATH STAFF

To help maintain security in Afghanistan, the United States has held discussions with Central Asian countries to allow transit flights of American military, reconnaissance and other aircraft through their airspace, said Gen. Stephen Lyons, commander of the U.S. Transportation Command.

According to Gen. Lyons, it is a new initiative led by the U.S. Department of State aimed at supplementing the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), which consists of logistical routes

to send supplies to NATO forces in Afghanistan.

NDN passes through several former Soviet countries, including all five Central Asian states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Pentagon has used NDN since 2009 to deliver nonmilitary cargo to U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

The U.S. desires better relations with Central Asia regardless of the outcome of peace talks in Afghanistan, said R. Clarke

Cooper, U.S. assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs.

One goal is to lessen these countries' reliance on Russia, a holdover from their days as republics of the Soviet Union.

Cooper expressed a desire that Central Asian states develop capacities and capabilities to increase interoperability with the U.S.

Sources: Ritm Evrazii, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Military Times

Afghan National Army Soldiers load equipment on a C-130 military transport plane in Kabul. REUTERS



Uzbekistan Updating Military Education

UNIPATH STAFF

A military delegation from Uzbekistan visited U.S. defense colleges in September 2019 with the intention of improving how the country trains its officers.

Led by Uzbek Deputy Minister of Defense Azizbek Ikramov, the delegation explored the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Army War College in Pennsylvania, and the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies.

The Uzbek Defense Ministry noted that the National Defense University provided the delegation with valuable information about “infrastructure, the general approach to training military personnel, and about basic principles of curriculum development for professional military education courses.”

Two months earlier, Uzbek Minister of Defense Gen. Maj. Bakhodir Nizamovich Kurbanov discussed similar matters during a visit to U.S. Central Command Headquarters, where he discussed military-to-military exchanges with CENTCOM Commander Gen. Kenneth McKenzie.

Improving his country's system of professional military education has been a priority for Uzbek President Shavkat

U.S. Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, commander of U.S. Central Command, discusses military exchanges with Uzbek Minister of Defense Gen. Maj. Bakhodir Nizamovich Kurbanov in July 2019.

SGT. RODERICK JACQUOTE/U.S. MARINE CORPS

Mirziyoyev. For years after declaring independence from the then-Soviet Union, Uzbekistan struggled to break fully with its past in terms of its overly rigid, ideological system of military education.

Things began to improve in 2012, when NATO agreed to provide assistance through the Defense Education Enhancement Program. Uzbek troops have traveled to the U.S. to receive training in subject areas such as the English language, aviation and military strategy. Special operation forces from Uzbekistan have trained successfully with the Mississippi Air National Guard in an exercise called Southern Strike.

Uzbekistan returned the favor in September 2019 by inviting U.S. transport pilots to train at an Uzbek airfield to acclimate themselves to desert and mountain conditions.

Sources: Pordrobno.uz, National News Agency of Uzbekistan, EurAsia Daily, U.S. Central Command

Kuwait National Guard Joins Police Organization

UNIPATH STAFF

The Kuwait National Guard has joined a multinational police organization that will allow it to learn from security forces around the world.

At a meeting in the Netherlands in October 2019, Kuwait achieved membership in the International Association of Gendarmeries and Police Forces With Military Status, known by the acronym FIEP.

Kuwait's membership will allow its National Guard to exchange experiences with 19 countries, including France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Morocco, Qatar and Jordan.

Founded in 1994, FIEP is an association of gendarmeries and police forces with military status originally from European countries on the Mediterranean seaboard.

Its objective is to broaden and strengthen relationships and promote innovative police cooperation to manage crises and defeat criminals, smugglers and terrorists.

The Kuwait National Guard's 2020 Strategic Plan stresses ways to improve performance. It aims to achieve that through better recruiting, acquiring newer equipment, highlighting professionalism in crisis management, and adhering more effectively to international human rights conventions.

Kuwait applied for membership in FIEP in 2014.

Sources: FIEP, Kuwait National Guard



QATAR TOPS ARAB WORLD IN FOOD SECURITY

UNIPATH STAFF

As a result of its government's continuous efforts to promote food security, Qatar was ranked best among Arabic-speaking countries for protecting its citizens from potential shortages.

Qatar's Food Security Department in the Ministry of Municipality and the Environment is charged with identifying gaps among in the nation's food supply. In addition, the department determines the economic feasibility of producing food domestically and providing land, irrigation, transportation and processing to accomplish that.

Qatar's National Food Security Strategy focuses on four main concerns:

- Exploring the types of food that can be produced or grown domestically without many inefficiencies.
- Stockpiling and creating strategic

reserves of imported foodstuffs that could feed the population for six months in an emergency.

- Using foreign trade to replenish food and diversifying sources of imports.
- Ensuring easy access to food, stability of prices and high quality in local markets.

In 2017, Qatar signed an agreement with the German firm Dorsch Qatar to establish the Hamad Port Food Security Project worth 1.6 billion Qatari riyals on 500,000 square meters of land.

A first of its kind in the country, the food-processing plant will be fully operational in 2020 and will have a minimum daily capacity to produce 300 tons of sugar, 500 tons of rice and 200 tons of cooking oil.

"Once the food-processing and

storage facility becomes operational, a stockpile for 3 million people for two years will be insured," Dorsch Qatar Operations Director Peter Neuschaefer said.

Despite shortages of arable land and water for irrigation, the country also endeavors to produce crops desired by its residents, including dates, root vegetables, salad greens and animal feed.

Many of the country's more than 1,300 farms receive subsidies to cover part of their water and electricity expenses. Some of these operations have adopted hydroponics: growing crops without soil in mineral-rich solutions.

Some of the larger farms include the Al Sulaiteen Industrial Complex, AGRICO and the Global Farm for Agricultural Supplies.

Sources: *Qatar Tribune*, *Al Sharq*



AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Kyrgyzstan COURTS THE EU

UNIPATH STAFF

Hosted by the Kyrgyzstani government in Bishkek in July 2019, the five Central Asian nations approved a historic agreement with the European Union to improve regional stability.

Foreign ministers from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan voiced support for the new EU Strategy on Central Asia. The strategy aims not only to improve cooperation on economics and trade, but also focuses on freedom of speech, democratization education and security in Afghanistan.

Bilateral relations between Kyrgyzstan and the EU were an important part of the Bishkek meeting. Both sides signed a historic bilateral agreement substantially different from the previous one signed in 1999.

"This agreement is very important. It will provide a legal basis for many projects and effective cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and the EU. And that is our main goal," then-EU Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini said.

In September 2019, the EU delivered on one part of its new Central Asian strategy: It pledged 4 million euros to support media, civic organizations and public events designed to help Central Asian citizens resist violent religious extremism.

To deepen the relations with the EU, Kyrgyzstani Foreign Minister Chingiz Aidaibekov proposed that his country host a first-ever EU-Central Asia Economic Forum in 2020. Mogherini welcomed the idea.

Sources: Euractiv, Radio Azattyk, Zona KZ, 24.kg

U.N. PROMOTES PEACE TALKS IN YEMEN

UNIPATH STAFF

The United Nations has established the Yemeni port of Hudeidah as the focus of its latest efforts to mediate between the warring parties in that country's civil war.

To implement U.N. Security Council resolutions aimed at ensuring a cease-fire, U.N. negotiators, the Yemeni government and Houthi rebels have established a Redeployment Coordination Committee that dispatches monitoring teams to help keep the peace in Hudeidah.

The committee held its sixth meeting in September 2019 aboard a U.N. chartered ship in the Red Sea waters near the city. It led to the establishment of a Joint Operations Center at the United Nations Mission headquarters in Hudeidah staffed by liaisons from the warring parties.

Previous agreements to help end the fighting came to naught, but both parties expressed hope that the September agreement would be more durable. The civil war has raged since 2015, immersing millions of civilians in humanitarian crises.

As part of that deal, Houthi rebels released 290 detainees they had held for years in parts of Yemen they controlled. The release was facilitated by the International Red Cross. This concession raised hopes that both sides would resume peace negotiations stalled months earlier. Sources: United Nations, Al Jazeera



U.N., Yemeni government and Houthi representatives meet on a ship near Hudeidah to try to end fighting in the region. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



National Rescue Center Opens in Jordan

UNIPATH STAFF

The Jordanian Civil Defense Directorate opened a Water and Mountain Rescue Center near the Dead Sea in September 2019, a consequence of the fatal flooding that struck the low-lying region in late 2018.

After the wet weather disaster in which 21 Jordanians died and 43 were injured near Wadi Zarqa Ma'in, His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein established a committee to prevent loss of life in the future.

The center — staffed by search and rescue teams and equipped with boats and diving equipment — emerged from the committee's recommendations. It will benefit not just Jordanians, but foreign tourists visiting the country during a wet season that runs roughly from October to March.

King Abdullah attended the center's opening ceremony, as did Maj. Gen. Mustafa Abed Rabbo Al Bazaiah, director general of the Civil Defense Directorate. Throughout 2019, Maj. Gen. Mustafa oversaw improvements in the nation's civil defense.

In March 2019, the Japanese government donated \$4.5 million to help the directorate upgrade its fire trucks to reduce response times. In September 2019, the German government agreed to provide aid to train and equip civilian volunteers to assist with natural disasters and other emergencies. Source: Almamlakatv.com

A Jordanian rescue team searches for survivors during flash floods near the Dead Sea in late 2018. REUTERS

Lebanon Benefits from International Partnerships

UNIPATH STAFF

The Lebanese Armed Forces continue to improve their training and equipment with the help of key multinational partners such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

The value of these partnerships was emphasized with a visit in October 2019 by British Secretary of State for Middle East and North Africa Andrew Morrison.

To prevent the infiltration of terrorists from Syria into Lebanon, Britain has constructed 39 towers on Lebanon's 230-mile border as part of a 62 million-pound program.

Since the program began in 2012, 11,000 Lebanese troops have been trained by a U.K. team in how to use the towers to spot approaching terrorists.

In July 2019, Lebanese Armed Forces Commander Gen. Joseph Aoun accompanied British Ambassador Chris Rampling and U.S. Ambassador Elizabeth Richard to visit the Land Border Regiments Command in the Bekaa Valley.

The group assessed how the program has progressed, noting how Lebanese forces achieved victory in ousting Daesh and the al-Nusrah Front from the border area during Operation Fajr al-Jurod in August 2017.

The U.K. is working closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces to strengthen Lebanon's stability and sovereignty and support it in fighting terrorism, said Ian Griffiths, British Embassy political secretary and program director.

The Lebanese Army "achieved tremendous success in 2014, as Lebanon was the first country to fend off ISIS, and in 2017 the Lebanese Armed Forces successfully expelled them from Lebanese territory," Griffiths said.

In mid-2019, the U.S. delivered six drones to Lebanon worth \$11 million as part of a military assistance package approved in 2018. Since 2005, the U.S. has supplied the Lebanese military with more than \$2.3 billion in assistance, including planes, helicopters and armored vehicles.

Sources: Al-Mashareq, Daily Mail, Naharnet



Oman Judged Safest for Foreigners

UNIPATH STAFF

Thanks to Oman's efforts to ensure the safety of its visitors, the sultanate was named the most secure country for expatriates in 2019.

Expat Insider 2019 is one of the world's largest and most comprehensive surveys of life abroad, to which thousands of expats from around the globe have contributed.

The 2019 quality of life survey included 64 countries and territories, each providing a minimum of 75 respondents.

Countries are judged in six categories: safety and security,

personal happiness, leisure options, health and well-being, digital life, and travel and transportation.

Countries are ranked on a scale of one to seven in each category.

Survey participants ranked Oman best in the world for safety and security, beating out such low-crime destinations as Singapore, Switzerland and Japan. Other recent global surveys have singled out the country's police for praise.

According to May 2019 tallies from Oman's National Centre for Statistics and Information,

more than 2 million expatriates live in Oman, most of whom are laborers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Jordan and the Philippines.

Aside from feeling secure, expatriates often note the friendliness of Omanis, reinforced by the country's culture of hospitality.

Although the cost of living in Oman has increased recently, it still ranks among the countries with the lowest cost of living in the Middle East.

Sources: [internations.org](https://www.internations.org), BBC, *Times of Oman*



Muttrah district of Muscat, Oman

ISTOCK



SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Unipath is a magazine provided free to those associated with security matters in the Middle East and South and Central Asia.

CONTRIBUTE TO *UNIPATH*

Send all story ideas, letters to the editor, opinion articles, photos and other content to *Unipath*'s editorial staff at CENCOM.UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL

SUBMISSION TIPS

- Content submitted in your native language is preferred. *Unipath* will provide translation.
- Articles should not exceed 1,500 words.
- Please include a short biography and contact information with each submission.
- Photo file size should be at least 1 megabyte.

RIGHTS

Authors retain all rights to their original material. However, we reserve the right to edit articles to meet space and style requirements. Article submission does not guarantee publication. By contributing to *Unipath*, you agree to these terms.

FOR A FREE SUBSCRIPTION

EMAIL US AT: CENCOM.UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL

Or write to: Unipath
U.S. Central Command
7115 S. Boundary Blvd.
MacDill AFB, FL 33621 USA

Please include your name, occupation, title or rank, mailing address and email address.