The Need to Neutralize Weapons of Mass Destruction Partners Promote Training at Eager Lion in Jordan Lebanon Updates Curriculum for Future Military Leaders

Overcoming Asymmetric Threats



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Saudis attend Shift 22, an annual street art festival, in the capital, Riyadh, in October 2022. AFP/GETTY IMAGES Kyrgyz women display crafts during a Salburun hunting festival at Chunkurchak gorge in August 2022. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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UNIPATH

Countering Asymmetric Threats

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🛲 KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE

aving spearheaded the manhunt for the remnants of Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia as well as dismantling its networks and killing or capturing its leadership, the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) has played a significant role in the fight against terrorist gangs and lawless groups since its establishment in 2003. Yet the role of CTS has not been limited to



merely combating terrorist groups active in Iraq; it has also been tasked with other missions, including helping quell the 2006 sectarian violence. With the help of our United States Special Forces partners, the CTS has succeeded in forging a cohesive force capable of deploying modern military technology and employing counterinsurgency, anti-guerilla tactics.

CTS's successes in the field are owed to the professionalism, patriotism, and drive of our Soldiers and is reinforced by the advanced training, guidance, and outfitting that it has received and continues to receive from U.S. partners who have worked shoulder to shoulder with the CTS through difficult years. It is in these difficult times that friends are tested.

After the Daesh invasion of Mosul in 2014, CTS emerged as a strategic fighting force that managed to hold its positions at Camp Ghazlani, Camp Speicher and the Baiji oil refinery, repelling the terrorists' desperate attacks. Credit for that is owed to the selection process for Soldiers, their faith in their just cause, courageous leadership, a high level of training and equipment, and the great moral support we received from the Iraqi people.

CTS forces were at the forefront in the battles to clear cities of Daesh terrorist gangs. Once terrorists had entrenched themselves among the local population, clearing operations became akin to delicate surgeries requiring high precision and focus. To avoid civilian casualties, we were forced to perform assaults with lightly armed forces. Intelligence then became a key factor in the defeat of Daesh and other terrorist groups. In this regard we must commend the major intelligence-gathering role played by international coalition aircraft in addition to their primary mission.

Despite CTS's ongoing pursuit of Daesh remnants and round-the-clock missions, it continues to sustain training and develop its combat capabilities at individual and unit levels.

Countering violent extremism is a complex process requiring root-level solutions to address causes. It cannot be addressed by militaries alone. After the great victory achieved by Iraqi Security Forces over Daesh, we began developing a counterterrorism strategy, holding conferences and laying out a strategy based on academic and scientific research to understand the true causes of violent extremism.

It is necessary to work with leaders and representatives

of civil society as well as the public to prevent extremist thought from incubating or finding sympathizers in the community.

After long experience fighting terrorist gangs and hunting down their leadership, we found that the key to these missions is constructing an integrated, nimble and fast-moving force because terrorist groups rely on speed of movement and conceal-

ment. This makes hunting them difficult under traditional military methodology of target tracking and early coordination with the main forces of the military in the area that is to be targeted.

Fourth-generation warfare has imposed a new challenge on armies by using low-cost technologies to strike vital high-cost targets. Terrorists have focused on using small drones to target important military and economic installations. The availability of these technologies on the open market and e-commerce sites allows terrorist groups to acquire and modify drones to carry payloads and reconnaissance cameras, setting off an arms race between armies attempting to consolidate their air defenses against this emerging threat and terrorist groups developing these weapons to penetrate air defenses of regular armies.

In the fight for Mosul, we addressed those challenges by using electronic jamming tactics and close-range sharpshooting. As a result, drones did not constitute a tactical advantage for the enemy. However, the 2019 attack on oil installations in Saudi Arabia was a shock to the world and brought to light the acquisition by terrorist groups of sophisticated weaponry that threatens national security.

In the Saudi attack, drones traveled a distance of 100 kilometers, which indicates that this type of drone is both new and different from those faced in 2017. Other sponsors of terrorism could develop these weapons to carry biological or chemical agents to inflict heavy civilian casualties.

The world must aggressively come together to confront this challenge and hold accountable the states providing these kinds of technologies to terrorist groups. Just as we witnessed the international community's response to Daesh, nations of the world concerned with combating terrorism must combine intelligence and pursue terrorist groups that use suicide drones to launch attacks against civilian and government facilities and hold accountable the countries that sponsor those groups and facilitate their access to such advanced military technology.

Friendly and allied countries must work hard to share intelligence to stop attacks. That includes countries working within a unified air defense system to protect vital installations and preserve air sovereignty.

Gen. Abdul Wahab Al-Saidi Commander, Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service

Averting Destruction

Middle Eastern Security Officials Absorb Lessons in Detecting, Deterring and Defeating Chemical, Biological and Radiological Threats

UNIPATH STAFF

mong the many cruelties Daesh inflicted on Iraq, terrorists bombarded the town of Taza near Kirkuk in 2016 using crudely constructed artillery shells and rockets laced with mustard and chlorine gas. Of the 45,000 inhabitants of Taza, 1,800 were accounted casualties of these forbidden weapons, many suffering from blistered skin and lungs.

Daesh's dalliance with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) — terrorists also tried to wield radiological dirty bombs from nuclear material pilfered from hospitals and research labs — provided a blunt warning to security officials in the Middle East about the larger threat to the region.

Military officers, border guards, police commanders, scientists and administrators tasked with countering WMD formed the training audience for the 4th Middle East and Gulf Cooperation Council Regional Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction Symposium.

The July 2022 symposium held in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, combined lectures with desktop training led by WMD experts. It attracted about 75 attendees from 11 Middle Eastern countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The symposium sought to boost countries' effectiveness in countering WMD through strengthened border security, intelligence-based risk assessments, and improvements in legal and bureaucratic procedures to streamline national response to such threats.

Preempting any chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological attack was the stated goal of the attendees. As one senior Iraqi military officer said in recounting the aftereffects of the Daesh mustard gas attacks: "I don't want to reach the response phase. I want to prevent attacks."

THE LOOMING THREAT

Yet much of the world is ill-prepared to detect and deflect WMD threats. No single country can marshal all the resources necessary to tackle weapons that in some cases can be produced in garages and bathrooms using how-to manuals on the internet. The deficiencies are many:

• International land and sea borders remain largely porous and prone to smuggling.



An Iraqi civil defense team decontaminates a building in Taza, a town Daesh attacked in 2016 with projectiles carrying illegal mustard gas. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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- Forms of uranium used for illicit devices are hard to detect with radiation sensors. Most interdictions result from perceptive, quick-thinking border guards and customs officers.
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the failure of international health regulations to stem the release and spread of dangerous pathogens.
- Dual-use biological and chemical agents those with applications both peaceful and malign are poorly regulated. Close to 95% of countries have no laws to prevent their use for nefarious purposes.
- WMD threats develop and adapt faster than the ability of governmental organizations to keep pace.

Up to this point, the world has been fortunate. Attempts at radiological attacks — including Daesh's seizure of radiological samples from hospitals and research labs during the occupation of Mosul — never reached fruition. The release of weaponized sarin gas in a Japanese subway and anthrax-contaminated mail in the United States were two of the worst non-military-style terrorist WMD attacks.

But the emergence of well-funded terrorist groups — some state sponsored — and the adoption of cheap and widely available delivery devices like drones have increased a sense of urgency among security officials. Adding to the unease, regimes such as North Korea's release videos suggesting nuclear weapons are a legitimate tool of state coercion.

For a criminal trying to smuggle a chemical, biological or radiological agent across borders, the rewards often outweigh the risks. One Lebanese general recalled how narcotics traffickers disguised drugs as pomegranates packed in crates. "If you can smuggle narcotics in pomegranates, you can smuggle anything," he warned.

CONTAINMENT THROUGH COOPERATION

Presenters at the counter WMD symposium promoted a threetiered approach to the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons threat: prevention, protection and response. Prevention — including improved border security — absorbed much of the focus of the conference.

Countries were urged to conduct threat and risk assessments for each category of WMD. Do criminals and terrorists have the means to acquire such dangerous materials? Do they possess the technical expertise to weaponize them? Does the use of such weapons correspond to their ideologies and intentions?

A Jordanian biological weapons expert vouched for a combination of export controls, licensing, diplomacy and interdictions to prevent WMD from falling into the wrong hands. Nevertheless, even if governments approve legislation to restrict the haphazard dissemination of biological agents, national agencies must possess the legal authority to enforce such controls.

In the realm of chemical weapons, the Iraqi Pharmacist Syndicate, a professional organization, has embarked upon a mission of licensing its members, building databases of dangerous chemicals and tracking their consumption. Iraqis noted that the country's 23 border crossings exacerbate the problem of tracking the movement of dangerous materials across international boundaries.

Terror in a Test Tube Potential Biological Weapons

- **1.** Enhancing biological agent or toxin
- 2. Disrupting immunity or effectiveness of immunization
- **3.** Conferring resistance to biological agent to skirt detection and prevention
- **4.** Increasing stability or transmissibility of biological agent
- **5.** Altering genetics of biological agent to widen host types (plant virus altered to infect animals, etc.)
- Enhancing susceptibility of host population
- **7.** Generating novel biological agents or reconstituting extinct microbes.

Source: Vivian Smith, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

WMD Threat Credibility Evaluation

The risk of WMD rises when these three criteria are met



Source: U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation



The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) contend with a similar problem. Lebanese troops have assumed policing responsibility for the country's volatile eastern and northern borders with Syria. The country also maintains nine coastal surveillance stations.

To prepare Soldiers for the task, Lebanon operates a Land Border Regiments' Training School with financial support from the Netherlands. With the aid of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation Prevention Program, LAF has brought improved training and technology to bear on the border.

Two elements of the U.S. military have also done significant work in helping Middle Eastern partners improve their performance against the WMD threat.

U.S. Central Command's J5-CWMD Division conducts dozens of training sessions a year in support of partners across the region and capitalizes on a range of military and civilian organizations to assist in those efforts. One key resource is the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) School. International officers and noncommissioned officers have benefited from on-site training and gone on to serve heroically in their home countries.

Scott Kimmel, a retired U.S. Army colonel and chemical officer who serves as deputy commandant of the CBRN school, said preparation is often the best deterrence.

To that end, Kimmel and his colleagues are focusing on technology and digitalization to accelerate analysis of suspicious substances. Robots as first responders can eliminate potential exposure of troops to toxins.

"We must remove the operators from the hazards," Kimmel told the symposium audience.

TRAINING AT THE SYMPOSIUM

For purposes of testing concepts featured at the symposium, attendees broke into eight groups, each focused on a specific WMD threat. The exercise forced these multinational task forces to coordinate regionally in the face of potential chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards.

The setting was three fictional countries whose terrain and seacoasts resembled those of the Middle East. A clandestine shipment of hazardous material from North Korea launched the scenario. To stave off disaster, the multinational teams conducted a variety of tasks: mobilizing troops, deploying hazardous materials squads, alerting international organizations, ordering naval interdictions and coordinating messaging to the public.

Over one large conference table, a Lebanese general responsible for border security, a Saudi senior military commander, an Egyptian colonel and a Jordanian military CBRN expert hashed out a response. Rounding out the team was a Qatari general, an Omani company commander and an Iraqi scientist whose specialty was countering chemical weapons proliferation.

Despite differences in military doctrine, governmental organization and legal systems in their home countries, the task forces completed their assignments to the praise of conference organizers.

"It's encouraging to see all these countries come together, capitalize on each other's technical expertise, and then formulate a plan," said Jon Drushal, a retired U.S. Army colonel and chemical officer who leads U.S. Central Command's Partner Nation Capacity Branch. \blacklozenge

A Jordan Armed Forces Soldier conducts CBRN training during the Eager Lion military exercise. The use of robotics promises to reduce human exposure to toxins. sgt. ZOE MORRIS/U.S. ARMY

Useful Resources

U.S. Central Command Partner Nation Capacity Branch: Operated under CENTCOM's strategy, policy and plans directorate, its mission is to help partner nations thwart WMD.

U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN)

School: Based at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri in the United States, the school invites Soldiers from across the world to attend courses in CBRN defense.

U.S. Defense Threat Reduction

Agency: DTRA's Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation Prevention Program sponsors programs focused on border security and WMD detection to stop the spread of these dangerous weapons.

International Atomic Energy

Agency: The Vienna-based organization works with countries to promote safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology. Its Incident and Emergency Centre offers a team of experts to address potential nuclear emergencies.

Interpol: Based in Lyon, France, this international police agency maintains a massive global database of known criminals and their crimes.

Sudden Disaster

The 2020 Beirut Port Explosion Offers a Test Case on How Forces Respond to Unexpected Catastrophe

UNIPATH STAFF

6:07 p.m. on August 4, 2020, a giant mushroom cloud formed over the Port of Beirut. The shockwave from the blast — caused by an explosion of 2,750 tons of stored ammonium nitrate obliterated whole neighborhoods of the Lebanese capital.

The disaster left more than 40,000 homes, apartments, shops and offices uninhabitable. In addition to the 218 dead attributed to the explosion, 6,500 Beirut residents were injured and another 300,000 displaced from homes and businesses.

Four hospitals, serving hundreds of thousands of people, were knocked out of commission. The main building of the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health was destroyed along with the other medical centers.

It was one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history and came at a terrible time for Lebanon, which had been enduring the COVID-19 pandemic, an economic crisis, public unrest and a Syrian refugee crisis.

The Beirut port explosion served as a case study at the 4th Middle East and Gulf Cooperation Council Regional Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction Symposium in July 2022. On the one hand, it illustrated resilience, generosity and heroism in the face of unanticipated disaster.

On the other hand, Lebanese officials have blamed the

catastrophe on administrative and regulatory incompetence, corruption, and ignorance. Officials still have no clear idea how such large quantities of ammonium nitrate even reached the port.

Though Lebanon has deemed the blast accidental, an attack by weapons of mass destruction would likely have evoked a similar initial response from civilian and military authorities. In fact, in the first hours after the explosion, Lebanese physicists surveyed the site for any traces of radioactive fallout.

That the readings turned out to be normal didn't still the fears of many Beirut residents who feared that they had been victims of a deliberate attack. The mushroom cloud footage would continue to feed the rumor mill.

ENTER THE MILITARY

As the most trusted institution in Lebanon, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) played an outsized role in the disaster response. Just 20 minutes after the explosion, the chief of the armed forces had formed a joint crisis management committee to coordinate the military and civilian response.

Within hours, 1,500 Soldiers were on the ground, cordoning off the wreckage, evacuating civilians and setting up medical stations for the injured. The mission quickly grew to encompass surveying damage, distributing humanitarian aid and clearing rubble from the port.

An LAF chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) company established in 2009 as part of an army engineering regiment focused on containing any contaminants loosed by the port destruction. They mapped and inventoried hazardous materials such as fireworks, toxic gases, flammable liquids and pesticides.

More than 6,000 liters of corrosive acid had breached its tanks, and Soldiers and civilians staunched and neutralized the spill.

A month after the initial disaster, a tire fire at a port warehouse threatened to ignite thousands of liters of heavy oil stored nearby. It took the combined efforts of Soldiers, firefighters and the Lebanese Air Force to suppress the blaze.



Lebanese troops help a Beirut resident injured in the port explosion. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



A Qatari military plane delivers field hospitals and medical supplies to Lebanon after the port disaster. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

PARTNERS HELPING PARTNERS

Lebanon's response came with a healthy helping of regional and international assistance. The U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency was instrumental in setting up the LAF CBRN company that did such stellar work after the explosion.

Physicists investigating the possibility of nuclear contamination in Beirut requested assistance from the Incident Emergency Centre at the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency. The agency helped reassure Lebanon that nuclear weapons played no role in the disaster.

Volunteers from 12 international search and rescue teams fanned out over the port and surrounding neighborhoods to free survivors from the rubble.

Within a week of the explosion, 162 planes arrived in Lebanon carrying humanitarian aid from 40 countries. Six cargo ships unloaded donations from wharves undamaged by the disaster. Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health covered medical expenses for more than 7,000 Beirut residents.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lebanese officials — both military and civilian — viewed the explosion as a regulatory failure compounded by corruption and incompetence. In discussing the catastrophe at the

Regional Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction Symposium, one Lebanese official called for a new culture of regulatory responsibility within the country's agencies and ministries.

"No agency wanted to be responsible if things went wrong," he said.

Such a new outlook would include stricter regulation of dangerous substances at the port, improved coordination among port agencies and a greater focus on hazardous materials training for Soldiers and first responders.

Iraqi officials have reached out to their counterparts in Lebanon for advice on inventorying hazardous material at Iraq's main port of Basra.

The Iraqis suggested creating an "environmental map" so that civil defense officials know what dangerous substances are stored and where. The goal is to avoid a Beirut-style disaster from engulfing Basra.

But after suffering \$5 billion worth of damage in August 2020 — damage on a scale to raise fears about similar threats in the future — Lebanon is directing its deepest analysis at itself. \blacklozenge

A Lebanese military helicopter douses a fire after the Beirut port explosion. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS







A FLYING FIGHTING FIGHTING FORCE

THE IRAQI AIR FORCE ASSUMES RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONDUCTING AERIAL OPERATIONS AGAINST DAESH

BRIG. GEN. AMMAR ALYASIRI, IRAQI AIR FORCE

y the second half of 2021, the Iraqi Air Force had largely taken ownership of conducting independent airstrikes on Daesh targets. In fact, we launched more strikes between June and December 2021 than all non-Iraqi coalition force strikes in the same period in 2020.

This ability to plan and conduct autonomous operations represents a significant step toward self-sufficiency for the Iraqi Air Force and provides a credible Iraqi dynamic strike capability that will help ensure the success of the counter-Daesh mission.

Success, however, brings its own challenges. Like many advanced air forces across the globe, the Iraqi Air Force (IQAF) must learn how to manage and maintain an expensive fleet of military assets to meet ever-changing security threats. It must do so against a backdrop of global political instability and turbulence in the international economy.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Iraqi Air Force was founded in 1931, during the period of British control of Iraq after World War I. The Air Force continued to grow from 1930 to 1990, culminating in the buildup during the long Iran-Iraq War, when the IQAF

Iraqi Forces with U.S. trainers take a break during a live-fire exercise near Mosul Dam in 2021. Iraq has focused on improving air power to build self-sufficiency. SPEC. TREVOR FRANKLIN/U.S. ARMY consisted of 1,029 aircraft, 550 of them combat aircraft. That made it the largest air force in the region at the time.

The war of 2003 devastated Air Force assets and infrastructure. The resulting depletion of equipment and manpower represented one the biggest challenges to the Iraqi Air Force and its coalition partners. Since that time, the IQAF has embarked on a hard and costly rebuilding campaign conducted by experienced Iraqi pilots. The IQAF receives most of its training and aircraft from the United States.

Currently, the IQAF consists of approximately 175 aircraft and acts as a support force for the Iraqi Army and Navy, allowing them to deploy their forces rapidly.

SMASHING DAESH

In June 2014, Daesh conquered large parts of Iraq and Syria. Almost 30% of the Iraqi sovereign governorates were under the control of the terrorists. However, the prospect of widespread instability and humanitarian crises prompted Iraqi society to act.

How could Iraq halt Daesh's momentum and then defeat an organization that controlled such large parts of the country without catastrophic losses? The answer quickly became clear: air power.

Despite all the technical and logistical challenges, IQAF shared responsibility with the coalition forces for supporting Iraqi ground forces. Flyers dropped humanitarian supplies, conducted air reconnaissance, transported military and civilian casualties, and struck Daesh assets and infrastructure.

All these operations hastened the process of eliminating one of the most ruthless modern enemies ever to harass our ancient civilization.

The U.S. military and its coalition partners — 29 countries — contributed military support by providing essential intelligence and precision airstrikes. In short, Iraqis would not have been able to retake territory from Daesh without U.S. and coalition airpower.

Iraq's coalition partners, stationed inside and outside the country, have given the members of the IQAF the knowledge, skills and experience to take the lead in aerial combat against Daesh.

The global coalition's forces have provided significant amounts of logistical and operational support to the IQAF, and



Iraqi tactical attack controllers (ITACS) train at AI Asad Air Base. By providing ground-based targeting, ITACS improve the performance of flight crews. STAFF SGT JOSE A. TORRES JR./U.S. ARMY



Iraqi pilots have gone from strength to strength in developing their capabilities.

By 2021, the Iraqi Air Force had become the country's principal strike force, hunting and destroying Daesh remnants and their few remaining hideouts.

IMPROVING AIR POWER

Air power plays a critical role in modern warfare; aggressive air operations accelerate the defeat of the enemy. Joint aerial operations — in other words, integrating the efforts of all partners — are essential to reduce losses in wartime.

That means the Iraqi Air Force must continue to modernize and keep pace with threats in the region.

In practical terms, Iraq must acquire advanced fighter aircraft and integrated air defense systems. The Air Force must participate in military exercises with coalition forces. Perhaps most importantly, the IQAF must sharpen skills through training and courses offered by international and regional coalition member countries.

Some recent innovations have improved the efficiency of our forces. The first is the creation of an "air cell" to coordinate activities among Iraqi Air Defense, Army Aviation and the Air Force.

Iraqi Tactical Attack Controllers, or ITAC, are Soldiers from the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service trained to direct air strikes day and night with portable communications equipment. These specialized troops — who number from eight to 10 in each Iraqi Special Operations Forces brigade — receive 10 weeks of training.

There is little need to elaborate upon what we all know, that today's most critical challenges are global in scope: the pandemic, the refugee crisis, destabilizing economic changes and violent conflicts exploited by global extremists.

All these challenges require a shared interest among security forces in coordinated, collective action. \blacklozenge

An Iraqi Soldier coordinates an air assault with a U.S. partner during military training near Mosul Dam in October 2021. SPEC. TREVOR FRANKLIN/U.S. ARMY



New International Naval Task Force To Enhance Red Sea Security

U.S. NAVY CENTRAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS

efending the Red Sea region from terrorists and criminals is the focus of a new multinational naval task force formed in April 2022 as part of the Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

During a ceremony at the U.S. Navy regional headquarters in Bahrain, Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and CMF, commissioned Combined Task Force (CTF) 153.

"This is a tangible and meaningful demonstration of our commitment to ensuring regional maritime security and stability through international cooperation," Cooper said.

As CMF's fourth task force, CTF 153 will focus on international maritime security and capacity-building efforts in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden.

CMF is the largest operational multinational naval partnership with 34 nations committed to the international rules-based order at sea. The organization's other task forces include CTF 150, which focuses on maritime security in the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean; CTF 151, which leads regional counterpiracy efforts; and CTF 152, dedicated to maritime security in the Arabian Gulf.

"The Middle East region is dynamic and vast. There's not one Navy that can patrol the surrounding waters by themselves," Cooper said. "We are always at our best when we are teaming with partners."

Cooper designated U.S. Navy Capt. Robert Francis to serve as CTF 153's first commander.

The task force staff will include as many as 15 U.S. and international military personnel from CMF member nations. The staff embarked aboard amphibious command ship USS Mount Whitney operating out of the Jordanian port of Aqaba. When not at sea, CTF 153 personnel will work from onshore offices at CMF headquarters in Manama, Bahrain.

CMF was established in 2001 by the United States and 11 like-minded countries to counter terrorism, including interdicting illicit arms and drugs shipments aboard vessels. The coalition later expanded to include counterpiracy operations and added a 34th member in 2021. \blacklozenge

Amphibious command ship USS Mount Whitney is moored in Aqaba, Jordan, as part of a maritime security mission. CPL DEANDRE DAWKINS/U.S. ARMY

ELER PARTNERS

The Eager Lion 22 military exercise attracts more than 5,000 troops to Jordan to showcase military strength

Royal Jordanian Marines fastrope from a UH-60 Blackhawk during training with a U.S. Marine battalion in September 2022. ager Lion 2022 featured a blistering conventional attack across a rolling desert landscape typical of the Middle
East. Tanks, heavy artillery, attack helicopters and fighter jets swept enemy positions from the desert floor until little was left but drifting dust.

But that conventional display of arms was just one facet of Eager Lion, which, as it celebrated its 10th iteration since 2011, increasingly focused on lightweight aerial drones, sleek unmanned underwater vehicles and cyberattacks launched with a click of a computer mouse.

Eager Lion's scenarios parallel what's happening in the real world. From conventional battlefield tactics to the revolution in unmanned vehicles, Eager Lion continues to stress military integration, joint operations and unity of purpose.

"We are collectively showcasing the strength of our militaries in all environments," Maj. Gen. Steven deMilliano, then-head of training for U.S. Central Command, said at a gathering of senior commanders at Eager Lion 22.

Twenty-eight countries participated in Eager Lion, which ran from Sept. 5 to 15, 2022, in sites across Jordan, from Azraq in the north to Aqaba in the south. Along with about 2,200 Jordanian Soldiers and 1,600 from the United States, troop contingents arrived from the Middle East, South Asia and Europe.

Bahrain, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia all sent representatives to Eager Lion.

Noteworthy was the size of the group from Saudi Arabia, which contributed infantry and tanks to the exercise's culminating live-fire event under the eyes of Saudi Maj. Gen. Adel bin Mohammad Al-Balawi, head of the Saudi Armed Forces Education and Training Authority. Royal Saudi Marines were also major participants in maritime training at the Royal Jordanian Navy Base in Aqaba.

As has been the case since the first Eager Lion in 2011, the 2022 exercise focused on threats across land, sea, air and cyber domains that require coordinated and collective action from multinational forces.

This interoperability extended not just to operations among troops of different nationalities, but also to military and civilian agencies within the Jordanian government. So, while multinational forces engaged in scenarios repelling speedboat attacks in the Gulf of Aqaba and routing terrorists holed up in a village, Jordan's National Center for Security and Crisis Management coordinated a whole-of-government response to a simulated threat to Jordan.

Troops deflected cyberattacks from fictitious enemies, practiced air and missile defense, defended land and maritime borders, combated enemy drones, responded to a potential attack by radiological weapons and provided humanitarian assistance.

"The scenarios for Eager Lion 22 are based on simulating the current strategic environment and addressing the threats within that environment, whether they be conventional or nonconventional threats from sub-state actors or terrorist threats," said Jordan Armed Forces Brig. Gen. Mohammed Ali Al-Samadi, who headed the command and control center for exercise participants.

"Through scenarios developed for this purpose, these threats are addressed in a combined joint operational environment of multiple military groups and countries that fits within the military doctrines used by the countries taking part. Some countries participated directly and actively in operations, such as Jordan, the United States, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, while others took part in the exercise as observers to gain experience in the general atmosphere of the exercise."



Military vehicles representing Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United States participate in the Eager Lion military exercise in September 2022. sgt. BENJAMIN MCDONALD/U.S. MARINE CORPS

A Jordanian F-16 Fighting Falcon deploys flares during the military exercise.



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Royal Saudi Land Force and U.S. Army tanks assemble for a live-fire event at the exercise

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An officer in the Royal Jordanian Navy orders patrol boats into formation during the military exercise. SGT. BENJAMIN MCDONALD/U.S. MARINE CORPS



Jordanian troops on a counterterrorism team guard a pier in Aqaba. STAFF SGT. JOSE REVES/U.S. ARMY

In the middle of the exercise, a senior leader seminar attracted top commanders from more than two dozen countries. Discussions focused on critical issues at the forefront in the Middle East.

The Kuwaitis focused on integrated air and missile defense, the Saudis on stopping improvised explosive devices and ballistic missiles, and the Jordanians on securing borders against narcotics smuggling and other threats to security.

Rear Adm. Curt Renshaw, director of operations for U.S. Central Command, led a discussion on defending against unmanned aerial system (UAS), hundreds of types of which are manufactured each year.

The speed of technological advance in the UAS field means militaries cannot rest in defending against them, he said. Of particular concern are fast, high-flying relatively heavy drones that can carry lethal payloads.

"UASs are so inexpensive they can proliferate in a hurry," Renshaw said.

Kuwaiti Brig. Gen. Khaled Al Shirann, deputy commander of the Kuwait Air Force, promoted the creation of a joint aerial defense system in the Arabian Gulf. A shared early warning system would provide 360-degree coverage to defend against not just drones, but also cruise and ballistic missiles.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have already begun the process of military integration, Brig. Gen. Al Shirann said. He cited multinational naval operations in the Arabian Gulf as part of the Bahrain-based Combined Maritime Forces and the combined Peninsular Shield Force deployed by the GCC.

Discussions about unexploded improvised explosive devices and ballistic missiles borrowed from the lessons of

the civil war in Yemen. Saudi officials said 471 missiles fired by Houthi rebels in Yemen had violated the airspace of GCC countries. Most were shot down, but some struck oil refineries, airports and power stations.

A mine clearance program in Yemen sponsored by Saudi Arabia — called Masam — has cleared 345,000 unexploded bombs.

On the issue of border security and preventing the transshipment of illegal narcotics, commanders noted that drug profits finance terrorists. Maj. Gen. deMilliano called for a common shared awareness to prevent gaps in border security that smugglers exploit.

Pakistani Lt. Gen. Muhammed Waseem Ashraf, Deputy General of Pakistan's Joint Staff Headquarters, noted that his country reduced illicit physical movement across borders by 83% by building 2,200 kilometers of border fencing with Afghanistan and Iran.

The barrier, combined with forts every 2 kilometers, greatly curtailed the smuggling of drugs and weapons, including IEDs that have been responsible for 70% of casualties among his troops guarding the country's northwest border.

"It has been a success story," Lt. Gen. Waseem said.

Eager Lion, hosted by Jordan for more than a decade, continues to enhance cooperation and preparedness among multinational partners in fields both old and new: counterterrorism, border security, drones, cybersecurity and countering weapons of mass destruction.

"We live in a world that faces threats that can pass through borders and across continents, expanding like a virus in the body," said Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat, then-Jordan Armed Forces director of military training. "There is no country that lives in isolation from these threats."



A View From The Top

The Jordanian commander who organized Eager Lion 22 discusses contemporary security threats to the region

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat, then-director of the Jordan Armed Forces' training and exercises directorate, played a leading role in the success of the Eager Lion 22 military exercise held in Jordan in September 2022. Unipath interviewed him about the importance of military training in tackling contemporary security challenges:

UNIPATH: How important is the Eager Lion exercise for stability and peace in the region?

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat: First of all, thank you for your interview. I would like to emphasize the depth of Jordanian-U.S. bilateral relations, as well as the deep ties between the countries participating in this year's exercise. The strategic environment has undergone rapid changes that have led to the emergence of extremist ideas and ideologies affecting security, peace and stability throughout the world. The Eager Lion 2022 exercise is a simulation of the reality of these changes and seeks to create a common military environment among countries to achieve security and stability through the implementation of numerous military operations at both the strategic and operational level.

UNIPATH: What is special about the Eager Lion 2022 exercise?

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat: The Eager Lion exercise is characterized by a number of distinctive features: First, the diversity and number of participants, whereby 26 brotherly and friendly nations, in addition to the United States of America and Jordan, took part in the exercise. This is reflected positively in terms of the diversity of expertise and the multiplicity of methods. Second is the nature and quality of the objectives that the exercise aims to achieve, namely fighting terrorism and enhancing the effectiveness of cybersecurity and information operations, as well as how to tackle the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Third, and this is most important, meetings and seminars which brought together senior military leaders, dignitaries and experts with the aim of discussing global problems and threats and how to tackle and address these at all levels. **UNIPATH:** The 2022 exercise is the first since the COVID pandemic. How did you manage preparation and coordination under COVID constraints?

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat: The fact of the matter is that the coronavirus pandemic cast a shadow over the whole world, not only in the areas of military and defense cooperation, but it has also had a huge impact on the economic and social lives of citizens. Therefore, the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army have transformed the challenges and difficulties into opportunities, managing the situation capably and efficiently. What gave them this expertise and good management is the previous exercises they carried out with brotherly and friendly nations, namely the Eager Lion exercise in its previous iterations. The Jordan Armed Forces have lived through every aspect of the coronavirus pandemic, which has given them the ability to deal with all the contingent variables, in addition to the ability to manage and unite efforts at the national level, making the pandemic a preparatory and coordinating period for the exercise.

UNIPATH: What current regional threats shape the planning of such a large exercise?

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat: The region is undergoing many changes and emerging challenges, so this year the focus was on a number of objectives to be achieved that affect international peace and security, namely the threat of terrorism and the risk of the use of weapons of mass destruction and the mechanisms for dealing with them, in addition to cyber threats and training to increase coordination and collaboration between governmental and nongovernmental bodies at the state and international level.

UNIPATH: How does Jordan maintain stability in a volatile region?

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat: We in the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army believe in the importance of living in a safe and secure environment. We draw our determination and our strength from His Majesty, the Commander in Chief of the Jordan Armed Forces, King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, who, in every international forum, calls for the right of nations



to live in safety and stability. This is why the Jordan Armed Forces have consistently striven to build and reinforce the imperative of international interdependence and cooperation to achieve a global environment suited to constructive and positive interaction. In spite of the regional crises that have cast their shadow over us, we continue to perform our duty and achieve international peace and security.

UNIPATH: The Jordanian and U.S. militaries enjoy a century of partnership. How important is this partnership for regional peace and security?

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat: The Eager Lion exercise, first launched in 2011 and now in its 10th iteration, is one of the most important exercises carried out by U.S. Central Command. Implementation of all the exercise's activities in the territories of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is absolute proof of the depth of strategic relations between the two countries, as well as proof of the important regional and international role played by Jordan in achieving regional security and stability in cooperation with its strategic partner, the United States of America.

UNIPATH: Daesh used chemical weapons on a small scale in Iraq and Syria. How can you preempt such scenarios and prevent violent extremists from accessing weapons of mass destruction?

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat: In light of the increase in conventional and nonconventional threats and with the objective of limiting their impact on the lives of citizens and to achieve the highest level of collaboration and coordination between the armed forces, other security services and various state institutions, we created many scenarios and crisis simulations to train participants on how to deal with them, the most prominent of which is the National Plan for Dealing with Chemical, Biological, Radioactive and Nuclear Materials (CBRN) and the National Plan for Dealing with Terrorist Operations, in addition to application of the National Plan for Dealing with Epidemic Diseases and Environmental Pollution. All these scenarios were carried out in coordination with the National Center for Security and Crisis Management in conjunction with the 2022 Eager Lion exercise to achieve the objectives within a complex operational environment, and to achieve in-depth strategic planning and raise the level of national capabilities in managing crises. Moreover, these plans and scenarios were based on the threats to which neighboring and regional countries have been exposed, and we in the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army are always seeking to develop our doctrine and combat readiness to deal with such changes and threats on land, at sea and in the air.

UNIPATH: How do you maintain border security with Iraq and Syria to repel terrorists?

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat: There is no doubt that the Jordan Armed Forces face many challenges and threats on the northeastern border with Syria and Iraq because of the consequences brought about by the regional environment and the nature of the volatile setting that has led to the emergence of foreign sponsored militias and organizations that seek to destabilize the security and stability of the kingdom and the region. These militias and organizations do not carry out conventional operations, but work to use new methods such as misinformation, media targeting operations and cyberattacks, in addition to the use of new methods of smuggling, such as drones, which require ongoing coordination and the recruitment of mobile training teams from the American side to train border guard forces. Our Armed Forces operate via an integrated system and high readiness to maintain security, safety and stability in the kingdom in particular and in the region in general, given Jordan's geostrategic location and role as a safety valve for the region.

UNIPATH: How does Jordan cooperate with international organizations to prepare for the threat of weapons of mass destruction?

Brig. Gen. Kayed Al-Jaarat: Jordan is constantly striving to make the Middle East a WMD-free zone and is committed to supporting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It works with the international community to ensure adherence to the treaty and implementation of its provisions. Similarly, Jordan's participation in the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament and its hosting of the initiative's 2021 Ministerial Conference and participation in all of its meetings is clear proof of Jordan's tireless work alongside relevant international organizations.



Transnational Criminals Disregard Borders By Abusing Technology

JORDANIAN MAJ. GEN. (RET.) OUDA SHUDEIFAT

espite all the blessings it bestows on mankind, technology is a doubleedged sword, damaging lives if exploited in ways that no longer help people.

Evil people can harness technology to serve sinister goals and purposes. Everything was legitimized to achieve the aims of deviants, extremists, narcotics traffickers, cheats and fraudsters, and terror practitioners in all forms.

How many crimes involved drones, how many lives were lost, how much blood was shed in vain, human dignity desecrated and property destroyed? Long-distance terrorism has become accessible and affordable, used by those who wish to abuse, destroy and subvert countries. It has reached the point where drones can transport narcotics and explosives, and we restrain and intercept them only with difficulty.

Despite all this, some technologically advanced countries have become masters at enhancing the capability and performance of these methods to further evil, spread chaos and destroy peoples' lives. They distract the armies of nations they view as hostile, savor the misfortune of others, and spread brutality and deceit via gangs, militias, and their protectors and schemers who fight their dirty wars by proxy in various countries. They sponsor those who cultivate, manufacture, export, trade and traffic in damage and destruction, and they have all the means to achieve their evil deeds and goals.

If destroying bodies and taking lives does not work, they strive to destroy minds, behaviors and morals, propagating anything to degrade societies and countries, encouraging depravity in all shapes and forms fueled by deceit, hatred and envy.

They use networks of instigators and agitators who spread rumors, lies, falsehoods, slander and fatwas that are compatible with their aims and desires.

Drones used by these people have become available and accessible to terrorist gangs in areas where terrorism has spread, and they will be used by the children of the camps of internally displaced people and Daesh, and by those who escaped from prisons and have been indoctrinated and trained by countries and militias and gangs.

Children of these camps are like a ticking time bomb within countries and on the borders of neighboring countries, along with some overseas illegal migrants. This mixture is the weapon that countries look for, sponsor and commit to, spreading poison and terror that does not discriminate between color, religion and creed. Their goal is to make chaos reign, distract every effort, preoccupy the troops, and eradicate the security of countries and borders. Terrorists have neglected no method or tool, misusing them and letting them serve their destructive projects. Despite the many positives of the sustained technological advancements the modern world is witnessing, there are many negatives, the most important of which is the delay by the international community in regulating emerging technology through laws that govern its use and punish those who abuse it, be they individuals, groups or nations.

Terrorists have taken advantage of the absence of international deterrence — and the support of some countries — to exploit information technology to serve domestic and transnational crime. They have organized recruitment and funding campaigns for terrorist groups through social media platforms, mobile phones, satellite phones, computers and virtual private networks.

They have attacked the internet, disrupted public computer systems, and conducted systematic online extortion and intimidation. To rein in this rampant terrorism, the international community must agree to put an end to cybercrime by enacting strict laws against any government or private entity proven to be involved in, promoting or turning a blind eye to this type of crime. Failure to take punitive action against a criminal can be the legal equivalent of complicity in the crime. ◆

MODERN INSTRUCTION TO ADDRESS MODERN THREATS



LEBANON'S FOUAD CHEHAB COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE SUPPLEMENTS OFFICER TRAINING WITH VISITS TO THE U.S. NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY



UNIPATH STAFF

cademic institutions rely on experience-sharing and inter-institutional cooperation to develop solid programs and professional staff with experience in nation-building. Military academies are perhaps in even greater need of inter-institutional engagement because of the many changes in the field of military sciences. Indeed, these institutions are making great efforts to keep pace with new tactics, most recently asymmetric warfare, the introduction of aerial drones to the battlespace, and the emergence of new fronts, namely, cyberspace. Consequently, we are seeing allied and friendly nations establish exchange programs, sending students to and receiving students from partner nations. The Fouad Chehab Command and Staff College in Lebanon is no different from other colleges and universities around the world in that regard and maintains close relationships with the United States, Britain and France. Among the most important of these programs is the exchange program with the U.S. National Defense University's Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA), which welcomes Lebanese cadets continuously. Unipath met with then-Fouad Chehab Command and Staff College Commander Brig. Gen. Hassan Jouni, who discussed the college and its programs.

Lebanese officers from Fouad Chehab Staff and Command College visit the U.S. National Defense University in 2022. The Staff Course curriculum at the college aims to develop commanding officers and prepare them to lead large military units or work as members of staffs. The curriculum includes all the techniques and mechanisms of military decision-making at the tactical and operational level needed by a commander to plan and assess the situation at all stages and levels so that the appropriate decision can be made to solve any tactical or operational issue, address security and counterterrorism challenges, or manage major crises.



Unipath: What are the objectives of the Staff College delegation's visit to the United States?

Brig. Gen. Jouni: The staff course officers' trip to the United States, specifically to the National Defense University (NDU), is designed to introduce these officers to contemporary strategic issues by presenting a set of lectures as part of a workshop organized by NESA. They include contemporary strategic and geopolitical topics presented by a number of lecturers and university professors from different countries, with diverse backgrounds and knowledge to approach these topics from multiple perspectives. In doing so, we expand the knowledge horizons of staff course officers, especially in major strategic topics, including explaining American foreign policy and its most important pillars, particularly in the current presidential era, and presenting key transformations that have taken place, especially in the Middle East. An exchange of cultures and knowledge also takes place among the lecturers and officers during discussions and interactions that occur as part of the lectures.

Unipath: Is this the first visit to NESA for the Lebanese staff college?

Brig. Gen. Jouni: No, about 10 years ago, visits were arranged for the officers of successive staff courses in coordination with the NESA Center for Strategic Studies and the U.S. Defense Cooperation Office in Beirut, and they have taken place since then, with the exception of the last two years because of the coronavirus pand

Unipath: How would you rate the lectures given by NESA professors?

Brig. Gen. Jouni: These are, of course, valuable lectures at the level of information, theses and theories, but their significance lies in the diversity of topics and in the diversity of the lecturers themselves — their intellectual and political backgrounds — which leads to an objective presentation of different topics. On the other hand, the focus on the Middle East benefits officers by broadening their horizons in terms of their understanding of international policies towards the region, especially U.S. policy.

Unipath: Can you talk about cooperation between Lebanon and the United States?

Brig. Gen. Jouni: What I can talk about is the academic cooperation between Fouad Chehab Command and Staff College and the U.S. National Defense University via our collaboration with the NESA Center, which has been an active and useful collaboration in the context of developing the culture of officers in the fields of strategy and geopolitics. Additionally, a U.S. consultant works with the College's leadership to help develop its education curricula. He is an expert in the field of strategic planning and coordinates academic cooperation between the College and U.S. military academic institutions.

Unipath: Does the Lebanese staff college have professors from other countries?

Brig. Gen. Jouni: The college sometimes hosts professors from friendly countries who are academics or retired officers, but only does so on an ad hoc basis. There are no permanent foreign professors. However, it should be noted that the college also has a French officer assigned to it by the French Army via the French Embassy in Lebanon. He is a military expert tasked with coordinating between the Staff College's leadership and the War College in Paris and with coordinating some joint exercises and exchange programs.

Unipath: Could you describe the Lebanese Staff College's focus?

Brig. Gen. Jouni: The Staff Course curriculum at the college aims to develop commanding officers and prepare them to lead large military units or work as members of staffs. The curriculum includes all the techniques and mechanisms of military decision-making at the tactical and operational level needed by a commander to plan and assess the situation at all stages and levels so that the appropriate decision can be made to solve any tactical or operational issue, address security and counterterrorism challenges, or manage major crises. The program also includes the planning of tactical and operational exercises brought to life by a virtual reality system to simulate maneuvers planned by cadets. Furthermore, several subjects fall within our "command and staff" curriculum, including critical thinking, communication, human resource management, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and civil-military cooperation. At the strategic level, given that this course is the highest in the Lebanese Armed Forces, it is necessary to approach the concepts of strategy and geopolitics through a program of lectures, seminars and related materials. In addition to all this, cadets are required to prepare scientific research on a strategic topic as a mandatory condition for acquiring the title of staff officer.

Unipath: How do you attract students from friendly nations?

Brig. Gen. Jouni: Army Command offers friendly militaries, especially those that host Lebanese officers in their military colleges, the opportunity for one or more of their officers to observe the staff course within the context of experience, knowledge and cultural exchange between friendly armies. As a result, Fouad Chehab Command and Staff College hosts between 10 and 15 officers from friendly Arab and foreign armies, provided that they are fluent in the Arabic language, since instruction at the college is carried out in Arabic.



DR. KHALID BIN MOHAMMED AL ATTIYAH, QATARI DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENSE AFFAIRS



Lusail Stadium in Qatar was the site of the first match at World Cup 2022. REUTERS

he year 2022 was a particularly special one for the State of Qatar, as we geared up to host World Cup 2022. I echo His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad in saying that we are extremely proud of the developments made by the State of Qatar and are thankful for the spotlight provided by the World Cup that has inspired and expedited our country's developments in many areas, chiefly in infrastructure and policy. Sports has an extraordinary effect on people; it is able to unite and excite a diversity of people. Sports in its best form exemplifies integrity and teamwork, where your best efforts are rewarded, and your limitations are supplemented by your teammates. In that sense, sports can be a true source of inspiration for global cooperation.

As we look at new forums of security cooperation, we must seek forums that unite countries through collective strength-building aimed at bettering and advancing security. It is only through a collective approach that true security is achievable. The game of one-upmanship has undoubtedly expedited innovation in the security sector but also has left many either as bystanders to innovation or isolated in their limitations.

The State of Qatar is fortunate with its abundance of resources, resilience of its people and vision of its leadership. Much of my country's resources have been directed toward advancing our people through education, research and development, and worldclass health care. In the area of security, Qatar focuses on building a well-trained and equipped force ready to protect our borders with a 360-degree focus on security. This is coupled with advancing traditional forms of security cooperation with allies and partners in intelligence-sharing, interoperability, peacekeeping initiatives, training and education.

In examining new forms of security cooperation, I took a step back to observe our current realities and extract some lessons learned from past and current world events.

We know that isolation, as demonstrated throughout history, further emboldens and reaffirms sentiments of wrongdoing rather than extinguishing the flames of aggression. After transgressions are dealt with firmly, those who find themselves defeated are assimilated back into the structures of global diplomacy, peace is built, and social and economic prosperity is ushered in.

Safeguarding the rights of states within collective frameworks, rather than maneuvering around the letter of the law to ostracize, builds the integrity of these institutions and compels members to uphold its structures.

Today, we often discuss global pivots or rebalances. I propose our mission be expanding and fortifying global platforms that are designed to lead global economic, political and social reforms, and advancements. By consolidating and expanding membership in these members-only clubs, an inclusive and sustainable model for growth and cooperation can finally be met.

An equitable system of cooperation first must be established if there is any hope of exploring new and innovative forms to sustainable global security and other categorical forms of cooperation.

I am often asked about Qatar's balancing game. How are we able to maintain relations, whether defense, political or commerce, with multinational partners with different interests? I want to stress that Qatar simply does not play games. We know who we are, our shortcomings and all; we know what we stand for and are following our own distinctive road map in the form of Qatar's National Vision 2030. Our character is known to all. When you deal with the state of Qatar, you know exactly who you're dealing with: an honest and reliable partner that will never hesitate to tell you the truth.



Troops with the Qatari Military Medical Service and Weapons of Mass Destruction Unit train with U.S. forces in 2022. Qatar prides itself on its multinational partnerships to tackle security threats. EDWIN L. WRISTON/U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Qatar's honest efforts are evident in many ongoing global issues such as the refugee crisis of Afghanistan and the rebuilding efforts in Lebanon. We do not give up in times of difficulty or punish individuals for their fickleness by withholding our best efforts from their people. Some might attempt to paint any efforts exerted by the State of Qatar as self-serving. To that I say, our global actions are led by our desire to serve the interests of global cohesion and peace. We understand fully that aggressions serve a few, but peace and its byproduct, economic prosperity, serve us all.

Historical security cooperation is often short-sighted, reactive and ultimately destructive. For security to be sustainable and resilient, it must be inclusive. Just like football, the shortcomings of one player must be covered by his teammates if there is any hope for success.

FENDING OFF Transborder Threats

TROOPS FROM CENTRAL AND SOUTH ASIA OPERATE TOGETHER DURING U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND'S REGIONAL COOPERATION 22 EXERCISE

UNIPATH STAFF

Tajik troops train with U.S. National Guardmen from Virginia during Regional Cooperation 22. SGT. 1ST CLASS TERRA GATTI/U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD hen a state stoked ethnic tensions to instigate a civil war in a bordering country, an international military coalition formed to prevent the conflict from engulfing the entire region.

Coalition forces consisting of a Tajik infantry regiment, a Pakistani special operations regiment, a Kazakh infantry regiment, an Uzbek mechanized infantry regiment, two Mongolian special operations companies, a United States mechanized infantry regiment and two NATO regiments deployed as peacekeeping troops. The enemy's use of asymmetrical warfare — social media propaganda, terrorist bombings and other unconventional tactics meant coalition forces couldn't rely on force alone to respond to realistic threats. They needed to transcend their cultural and linguistic differences to operate effectively as a team.

This simulation was the main event at Regional Cooperation 22 (RC 22), a U.S. Central Command military exercise held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from August 10 to 21, 2022. The aim of the exercise was to muster multinational troops in a joint mission to counter terrorism, keep the peace and provide stability for a region with terrain approximating that of Central Asia.

"Our regional security is a collective effort; it is essential for us to cooperate with regional militaries in order to secure our common borders and deny access to criminal and terrorist groups," said the Pakistani defense attaché to Tajikistan, who was a participant in Regional Cooperation. "Pakistan is always keen to join regional and international military exercises that benefit all participants."

More than 300 commissioned and noncommissioned officers from the militaries of participating nations took part in the exercise alongside a large contingent from host nation Tajikistan, which provided the logistical support required for the exercise. In addition to Tajikistan, the observers included troops from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the United States and Uzbekistan.

Most of the exercise consisted of computer simulations that required participants to coalesce into a brigade headquarters staff to command fictional forces on the ground. This command post exercise focused on promoting cooperation and interoperability among participating nations and coordination between the armed forces and international organizations dealing with issues of displaced persons and humanitarian aid.



Tajik Soldiers practice applying tourniquets during a medical information exchange with U.S. National Guardsmen from Virginia and Massachusetts. SgT. 1ST CLASS TERRA GATTI/ U.S. ARRWY NATIONAL GUARD
To enhance tactical skills, dozens of troops also took to the field at a military base outside Dushanbe to practice close combat, convoy protection, evacuation of the wounded and counterterrorism operations. Those drills engaged both Tajik troops and National Guard units from various U.S. states as part of the State Partnership Program.

In a speech during the exercise, U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Maurizio Calabrese, deputy commanding general of the Over-the-Horizon Counterterrorism headquarters at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, praised Regional Cooperation as a "noble effort to increase the collective security of the region."

"We collaboratively worked through processes to promote further development and cooperation between military and civilian organizations using a complex scenario," Brig. Gen. Calabrese said. "Our training focused on addressing border security challenges, developing counterterrorism techniques, refining counter weapons of mass destruction and counternarcotics operations while enhancing other critical tasks required to develop our mutual security."

One of the most important parts of the exercise required headquarters staff to respond to terrorists conspiring to disrupt the peace. Training scenarios described terrorists as pumping out misinformation over the internet, fomenting ethnic strife and smuggling weapons to proxies. A United Nations peacekeeping force withdrew after the terrorists ambushed them, prompting the RC 22 coalition to fill the security gap.

Terrorists and rogue states use asymmetric warfare to foment ethnic and sectarian conflicts in neighboring countries. Bad actors, working through "electronic armies," carry out social media campaigns to stir up ethnic and religious discontent. Misinformation feeds fears that the group is a victim of violence and displacement. The ultimate aim is recruitment to the terrorists' or malign state's cause. Murder and other violence usually follow.

In one training scenario, reconnaissance aircraft spotted a group of terrorists attempting to infiltrate an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp to recruit young people, confirming an earlier report about the distribution of pro-terrorist pamphlets among that group. This caused coalition forces to intensify the screening of displaced people to ensure there were no terrorists residing among them. Past experiences have shown that IDP camps have been a major recruiting ground for terrorist groups who take advantage of feelings of alienation and hopelessness among refugees.

Another intelligence report indicated that the terrorist group was seeking chemical and biological weapons to strike vital infrastructure. Coalition forces' reconnaissance aircraft captured images of terrorists attempting to use smuggling routes favored by drug traffickers.

The joint headquarters staff decided to sever the smuggling corridor by aerial bombardment and assigned special operations forces the task of raiding smugglers' hideouts in that area to prevent the delivery of chemical and biological weapons to the terrorists.

Col. Kakhramon Achilov, chief of the Uzbek military delegation of 17 Soldiers assigned to Regional Cooperation, vouched for the value of the exercise in encouraging participants to reach consensus to confront security threats. He called Uzbekistan an active and important player in supporting security in the region.



"In the course of RC 22, we worked on issues related to ensuring security and stability in the region through close interactions related to different scenarios of rapidly changing situations in the world," Col. Achilov said. "In addition, participants of the exercise improved their skills in organizing joint work in teams formed temporarily for that purposed."

Bridgette Walker, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan, heralded Regional Cooperation, held by U.S. Central Command since 2001, as a successful example of joint cooperation to confront challenges to regional security.

The next Regional Cooperation was scheduled to be held in Montana in the United States in June 2023.

"This exercise is just one example of cooperation between United States, Central Asian and South Asian states armed forces and shows our commitment to increasing our partners' ability to defend against militants and eradicate the flow of illegal narcotics," she said. ◆ Coalition partners study terrain. MJ. PHIL BLANCHARD/ U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



SERVING YEMEN



Yemeni troops parade in Taiz on a holiday honoring the creation of the Yemeni republic.

YEMEN'S TOP MILITARY COMMANDER FIGHTS FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN HIS COUNTRY

BRIG. GEN. FAISAL AL-JUMAI, YEMEN NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO USCENTCOM PHOTOS BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES

LT. GEN. SAGHEER HAMMOUD BIN AZIZ stands

at the top of the Yemeni Army as chief of the General Staff and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, crowning a military career that began in high school in 1983, when he embarked upon a rich journey between military and civilian life in Amran governorate in the north of the Republic of Yemen.

Lt. Gen. bin Aziz descends from the Sufyan tribe, one of the main pillars of the Bakil tribe in Yemen. He was born in 1967, and his father was a sheikh of one of the largest subclans of the Harf Sufyan tribe, and one of the main sheikhs of the Bakil tribe. When Sagheer bin Aziz moved to the capital Sanaa to study in high school because of the lack of suitable schools in his hometown, he joined the Yemeni Army in 1983 and was promoted to second lieutenant in 1990. He took part in the battle for Yemeni unity a few years later.

In 1997, he ran for election to become a member of the Yemeni Parliament for the ruling General People's Congress

Lt. Gen. Sagheer Hammoud bin Aziz, chief of staff of the Yemeni Armed Forces, speaks during a graduation ceremony for new cadets in Marib in June 2022.



Party and won his constituency of Harf Sufyan. He ran for the office a second time in 2003 and was reelected to parliament. During that period, Sagheer bin Aziz would leave the parliamentary chambers at the end of the day to go to school in Sanaa to learn English.

As a Soldier, Sagheer bin Aziz took charge of several missions and moved up the military ladder. He commanded several military formations and was deputy chief instructor at Tariq bin Ziyad Camp for the Yemeni Republican Guard. He was then appointed head of Tariq camp operations.



Yemeni security forces take part in a parade in Taiz in September 2022 to celebrate the anniversary of the 1962 revolution that established the Yemeni republic.

The most important shift in Lt. Gen. bin Aziz's life occurred in 2008, when the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels decided to expand their war against the Yemen state from Sa'ada toward the Harf Sufyan district of Amran governorate. There, bin Aziz confronted them as a parliamentarian, tribal sheikh, and Yemeni Army officer, and he mobilized the tribes alongside the state to face the Houthis. He and his tribesmen fought a fierce battle against the rebels, and the Houthis blew up his home, seized his property, and martyred and wounded many of his friends and tribal members.

These experiences forged Lt. Gen. bin Aziz into one of the Houthis' most notable foes. His presence as head of the Armed Forces, fighting the battle once again after the Houthi coup and occupation of the Yemeni capital in 2014, is highly symbolic.

In 2016, he was appointed deputy chief of the General Staff for Training Affairs and promoted to the rank of major general. A year later, he obtained a master's degree in military science from our ally, the Republic of Sudan, and in 2018 earned a fellowship degree in strategic studies from the National Defense College at Nimeiri Higher Military Academy in Sudan.

Yemeni demonstrators demand an end to an eight-year blockade on the city of Taiz imposed by Houthi rebels. Gen. Sagheer has tried to create the conditions for an equitable peace in Yemen.



He resumed his direct role in Yemeni national affairs following completion of the United Nations-backed Stockholm Agreement in Hodeida governorate on the Red Sea, when he was appointed head of the government team to implement the agreement and observe the redeployment process.

In mid-2019, Yemeni President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi appointed then-Maj. Gen. bin Aziz as commander of Operations. He moved to Marib governorate, site of the temporary Yemeni Army headquarters and engaged in fighting in coordination with the Saudi-led Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen.

In February 2020, President Hadi named Maj. Gen. bin Aziz Chief of the General Staff and promoted him to lieutenant general, a rank achieved by only a few Yemeni generals in the nation's history. From that time, he has fought on the battlefields, joining his Soldiers on the front lines against the Iranian-backed Houthi militia. These battles have been centered on the strategic Marib governorate over the past two years.

Lt. Gen. bin Aziz resides at the advanced military barracks and garrison headquarters to lead the fight, and the Houthi militia stalks him with missiles and drones made by Iranian experts who run such operations for the Houthis. In May 2020, Lt. Gen. bin Aziz's son was martyred by a Houthi ballistic missile, an attack that also killed seven of the general's comrades.

The Houthis also targeted the general's home north of Marib city with three rockets and destroyed it in October 2021, as well as targeting the military headquarters he sometimes frequents. A number of his relatives and comrades have been killed in battle or targeted for death. However, all these losses have only increased the commander's determination and courage on the battlefield.

Everyone who knows Lt. Gen. bin Aziz unanimously vouches for the wisdom of the man and recognizes the old-fashioned values that characterize him, values inherited from his social and tribal upbringing. Combined with his military training, the general's values molded his personality into a unique combination of modest leader and hardened warrior.

Lt. Gen. bin Aziz's reassuring presence on the front lines with his Soldiers remains an inspiration for those fighting for a just Yemeni peace. \blacklozenge

Lt. Gen. Sagheer Hammoud bin Aziz (front row, third from right) and other senior Yemeni officers attend a graduation ceremony for cadets.



Informing Policymakers of Potential Threats Requires Adopting Modern Intelligence Collection Techniques

ICE

LT. COL. DR. KHALID MOHAMED ALQAHTANI, BAHRAIN DEFENCE FORCE

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When considering the intelligence field, psychological studies show that the human mind struggles to provide useful and unbiased analysis unless rigorously shaped using professional tools and techniques of the intelligence craft.

These tangible and intangible tools ultimately validate their effectiveness if they produce clear and correct results valuable to the user of intelligence reports. This new era in intelligence science requires an openness to information from many sources. Rigid thinking — accepting only facts that narrowly conform to prejudices — should be cast aside. Analysts must possess the mental and emotional flexibility to change course when presented with evidence that contradicts comfortable assumptions. Only in this way can analysts draft intelligence reports that enlighten decision-makers as they shape the fate of society and politics.

Intelligence analysts are expected to understand their humanitarian mission and adhere to the following principles:

- *Focus* on achieving the objective in line with the policy of using accurate mechanisms in the analysis. This is in addition to the brainstorming used by the analyst to make the analysis process accurate.
- *Create* security reports that adhere to the policy of the organization or

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa of Bahrain visits France in 2022.





Providing good intelligence to political and military decision makers is a critical component of warfighting and peacemaking. the state and will receive immediate acceptance and the analyst will be appropriately rewarded. Security reports that contradict the required policy will be ignored.

• *Communicate* the required analysis to the user(s) and convince them of its credibility, and trust the user(s) will act accordingly.

Intelligence analysts also face many challenges, including:

- Analysts need a good sense of timing in submitting the analysis.
- Analysts should have little difficulty defending their reports and should do so as if they are lawyers defending a point of law.
- Analysts need to capture the attention of the policymaker without sacrificing credibility.

- Political decision-makers expect to hear clear summaries and conclusions that ultimately serve the public interes Distorting analysis to conform to a public or private interest is unethical and unprofessional.
- If an analyst aims to alter a political decision regarding national security, he or she must present convincing tangible evidence. The best type of evidence is collected and validated using modern professional tools.
- Reports must be concise maybe one or two pages — to respect the busy schedule of the policymaker.
- It's best to divide complex problems into sections so they can be analyzed more thoroughly and efficiently until a unified picture can emerge.

One of the most important jobs of an analyst is the prompt delivery of written or



oral reports, which should based on:

- The sensitivity of the party receiving the information. It is extremely important for the head of a government department to know secrets and risks when making decisions that affect his department.
- Information must reach the leadership as quickly as possible without bureaucratic obstacles.
- Information must be clear and accurate, avoiding exaggerations or underestimations.
- Because time is limited and government leaders are often preoccupied, intelligence analysts must strike a balance between overwhelming decision-makers with too much information and supplying them with too little information.
- It is important to ensure reports

don't conflict or provide unnecessary duplicate information.

• To achieve these requirements, the intelligence apparatus and the governmental authority requiring the intelligence must maintain clear channels of communication and coordination. Information must flow as smoothly as possible within administrative structures and hierarchies.

Using the measures discussed in this article, analysis can be improved for greater accuracy, despite the sometimes ambiguous information with which intelligence analysts work. Although intelligence failures will never be completely eliminated, these measures improve the odds that decision-makers will be well informed when deciding which policies to pursue.

Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs Fuad Hussein speaks at the Manama Dialogue security conference. Bahrain has raised its profile by hosting international diplomats and ministers each year.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

CENTCOM Commander Embarks USS West Virginia Ballistic Missile Submarine

UNIPATH STAFF

n October 19, 2022, Gen. Michael "Erik" Kurilla, commander of U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), conducted a visit aboard the USS West Virginia, a U.S. Navy Ohio-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine at an undisclosed location at sea in international waters in the Arabian Sea.

Kurilla was joined on the USS West Virginia by Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet and U.S. Navy Central. During his visit onboard the submarine, Gen. Kurilla received a hands-on demonstration of the capabilities of the vessel, which operates globally under U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM).

"I was thoroughly impressed with the crew of the

USS West Virginia; these Sailors represent the highest level of professionalism, expertise and discipline across the U.S. military," Gen. Kurilla said. "These submarines are the crown jewel of the nuclear triad, and the West Virginia demonstrates the flexibility, survivability, readiness and capability of USCENTCOM and USSTRATCOM forces at sea."

USSTRATCOM forces are on watch 24 hours a day globally, operating in all domains, while supporting other commands to defend the United States and its allies.

West Virginia is one of six ballistic-missile submarines stationed at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Georgia, and is capable of carrying up to 20 submarine-launched ballistic missiles with multiple warheads.

"I was thoroughly impressed with the crew of the USS West Virginia; these Sailors represent the highest level of professionalism, expertise and discipline across the U.S. military."

~ Gen. Michael Kurilla, USCENTCOM commander



Gen. Michael Kurilla peers through a periscope on the submarine USS West Virginia.



Bahrain Commits to Peaceful Space Exploration

UNIPATH STAFF

Several years after forming its National Space Science Agency (NSSA), Bahrain became the second Arab nation to sign the Artemis Accords, a U.S.-led agreement to create internationally recognized rules for space exploration.

Mohamed Al Aseeri, head of the Bahrain space agency, signed the accords in March 2022 during a session of the U.S.-Bahrain Strategic Dialogue. The country deployed its first satellite, called Light-1, in February 2022. The jointly financed Bahraini-Emirati project aims to measure atmospheric gamma rays.

"I am so pleased to see Bahrain has shown its commitment to the peaceful exploration of space by signing the Artemis Accords," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said. "This important decision by Bahrain follows the recent successful launch of the Light-1 spacecraft, developed by Bahrain's National Space Science Agency in cooperation with the United Arab Emirates, another Artemis Accords signatory."

NASA, together with the U.S. Department of State, announced the Artemis Accords in 2020, timed to coincide with planning for a U.S.-led mission to return astronauts to the moon by 2024.

Bahrain's signing of the accords was a topic of a March meeting between His Royal Highness Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Bahrain was the 17th country to join the accords. Though it has announced no plans to participate in upcoming moon exploration, the country's space agency defined one of its missions as promoting "space science and associated technological concepts."

The year 2022 also marked Bahrain's selection to be part of a program sponsored by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. Bahrain's NSSA was chosen to develop a satellite payload — called Aman — to help secure communication between the satellite and a ground station. The UAE is also involved in the project.

"I am so pleased to see Bahrain has shown its commitment to the peaceful exploration of space by signing the Artemis Accords. This important decision by Bahrain follows the recent successful launch of the Light-1 spacecraft, developed by Bahrain's National Space Science Agency in cooperation with the United Arab Emirates, another Artemis Accords signatory."

~ Bill Nelson, NASA Administrator

"Aman is considered the first Bahraini payload fully designed, integrated and tested by NSSA," Al Aseeri said.

"This opportunity is unprecedented in our quest to contribute meaningfully to the global effort towards sustainable, peaceful use of outer space and building national capacity in the space field." Sources: NASA, SpaceNews, The National



Uzbekistan Strengthens Strategic Partnership with U.S. Cooperation Deepens After More Than Three Decades of Vital Diplomatic Relations

COL. MUZAFAR RAKHMATULLAYEV, MILITARY ATTACHÉ, EMBASSY OF UZBEKISTAN TO THE UNITED STATES

n 2022, we celebrated the 31st anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence, which we value as sacred and absolute. More than ever, we treasure our sovereignty, independence and freedom and remember the founding generation who pledged their lives, fortunes and honor to secure our country's independence.

To quote Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev: "Uzbekistan is moving from a period of national revival to a period of national prosperity."

We greatly appreciate the United States for supporting Uzbekistan, marking another important milestone with the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and the U.S. Over the years, this bilateral relationship has blossomed to the advantage of our countries and the region at large.

Uzbekistan and the United States have shared a strategic partnership for 20 years, a partnership that prioritizes regional security, stability and economic prosperity. Annual political consultations known as the Strategic Partnership Dialogue create new opportunities for closer and stronger multifaceted cooperation and engagement.

I want to salute the friends across all government agencies for their sterling work. The expansion of the Uzbekistan-U.S. strategic partnership was accomplished with grace and dignity, thanks in part to the efforts of the U.S. Congressional Uzbekistan Caucus.

Military cooperation has been a cornerstone of our partnership. I'm delighted to single out Chief of the National Guard Bureau Lt. Gen. Marc Sasseville and my longtime friend, Commander of the Mississippi National Guard Maj. Gen. Janson Boyles. The year 2022 marked the 10th anniversary of the State Partnership Program between the Ministry of Defense of Uzbekistan and the Mississippi National Guard.

It is gratifying to note that over the years our ties with Mississippi have expanded even beyond the military realm. I also would like to thank the American-Uzbekistan Chamber of Commerce and its members for their generous support.

Uzbekistan and the U.S. stand at a point in history where many things are possible:

- We rely on the U.S. for unwavering support of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Uzbekistan.
- The United States can capitalize on supporting transport and energy connectivity and fostering trade within better integrated economies in Central Asia, and mitigating climate change challenges.
- U.S. economic presence in Uzbekistan could be best exercised through more active private-sector engagement in tech, innovations, education, digital commerce, green energy and renewables, agrobusiness, textiles, finance, and banking.
- Both countries could further strengthen cooperation within C5+1 to achieve tangible outcomes in our partnership. We are looking forward to upcoming ministerial meetings with the U.S. State Department.

Uzbek and Mississippi National Guard special operations forces practice airborne operations. TECH. SGT. JON ALDERMAN/U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD



A Decade of Military Partnership

he State Partnership Program between the Ministry of Defense of Uzbekistan and the Mississippi National Guard has yielded spectacular results for more than 10 years. The program matches National Guard units from particular U.S. states with partner countries around the world to build security cooperation.

Between 2012 and 2022, Mississippi and Uzbekistan have engaged in 198 events, 44 key leader engagements, 51 bilateral conferences and four different recurring military exercises, including U.S. Central Command's Regional Cooperation exercise.

"I am thankful for 10 years of extraordinary partnership with the leaders and service members of Uzbekistan," Mississippi National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Janson Boyles said. "Our united efforts strengthen our partnership through understanding and support of our defense security goals, building a foundational platform of trust and cooperation."

Here are some of the highlights:

- In 2015, five Mississippi National Guardsmen visited Navoi, Uzbekistan, to train partners in the use of U.S. mine resistant ambush protected (MRAP) vehicles.
- In 2018 and 2019, political representatives from Uzbekistan and Mississippi participated in overseas trade delegations to build economic links between the two countries.

An Uzbek Soldier fires at targets during the Mississippi National Guard Best Warrior Competition 2022 at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center in Mississippi. SGT. 1ST CLASS SHANE HAMANN/U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

- In 2020, Maj. Gen. Boyles hosted dignitaries such as Uzbek Ambassador to the U.S. Javlon Vakhabov, U.S. Ambassador to Uzbekistan Daniel Rosenblum, U.S.
- Ambassador to Uzbekistan Daniel Rosenblum, U.S. Central Command's Deputy Director of Planning Brig. Gen. Duke Pirak, and Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeve. Gov. Reeves hosted a dinner for the delegation at the Governor's Mansion.
- In April 2021, 24 Uzbek Soldiers participated in an airborne operation with Special Operations Forces (SOF) troops with the Mississippi National Guard. It was the first time Uzbek and Mississippi SOF conducted airborne operations jointly.
- In 2021, the 2nd Battalion of the Mississippi National Guard's 20th Special Forces Group provided four instructors to train Uzbek special operations troops at the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School. The same trainers continued training military partners for six weeks in Uzbekistan.
- Five Mississippi National Guardsmen have served at the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent. ◆

An Uzbek Soldier runs an obstacle course with the Mississippi National Guard during a Best Warrior Competition in 2022. SGT. 1ST CLASS SHANE HAMANN/U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

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A Partner on Patrol

Rear Adm. Mohammed Yousif Al Asam, Royal Bahrain Naval Force commander, is a proponent of regional naval coalitions

UNIPATH STAFF

ear Adm. Mohammed Yousif Al Asam joined the Bahrain Defence Force in 1979 as an officer candidate and was sent to the Pakistan Naval Academy in Karachi, where he graduated with honors with a bachelor's degree in marine science. He progressed through numerous positions aboard naval missile boats as a navigation officer and operations officer until he assumed command of his first ship in 1993 with his appointment to the missile boat al-Jabri.

Further ship commands awaited him — including aboard the frigate Sabha — until he took charge of Bahrain's Special Naval Group in 2009. Two years later he assumed the post of Head of the Training Division. In 2012 he was appointed Deputy Commander of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force. He rose to the top job — Commander of the Naval Force — in 2017.

Rear Adm. Mohammed has supplemented his hands-on naval experience with coursework at prominent naval academies around the world. The most prominent of these was a course in international communications from the United Kingdom in 1986, a command and staff course from the United Kingdom in 1990, a higher diploma in naval law from Greece in 1997 and a naval warfare course at the U.S. Naval War College in 2008.

His military career is draped in accolades: Bahrain Medal First Class, Bahrain Medal Second Class, Dialogue Medal First Class, Order of Military Merit, Order of Power, Field Service Medal, Order of Gallantry, Order of Competence and the Long Service Medal.

Rear Adm. Mohammed agreed to an interview with Unipath about the role of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force in achieving regional security:

UNIPATH: What are the responsibilities of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force?

Rear Adm. Mohammed: The Royal Bahrain Naval Force's responsibilities fall within the Bahrain Defence Force system, which was established by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa



Rear Adm. Mohammed Yousif Al Asam visits the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt. The admiral has been a strong supporter of multinational forces defending the Arabian Gulf. PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS ALEX PERLMAN/U.S. NAVY

Al Khalifa, sovereign of the nation and beloved supreme commander, may God protect him. His Majesty's strategic insight was that the Kingdom of Bahrain should have a modern naval force to protect the nation's achievements and the renaissance it witnessed during the second half of the 20th century. The primary mission of the Navy is to defend the kingdom's territorial and economic waterways, maintain its stability and sovereignty, and combat potential aggression.

UNIPATH: How has the Kingdom of Bahrain begun to modernize its naval forces?

Rear Adm. Mohammed: Our wise leadership is interested in developing the Bahrain Defence Force, of which the Navy is considered a crucial element. It works constantly along-side land and air forces to achieve an interdependent system of defense. Today, in the 21st century, we see that military forces must be formed from a combination of systems — naval vessels, aviation and manpower — to achieve missions entrusted to them. In the maritime field, and based on

An unmanned surface vessel operates beside Royal Bahrain Naval Force fast-attack craft RBNS Abdul Rahman Al-Fadel during the New Horizon exercise in October 2022. PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS DAWSON ROTH/U.S. NAVY Bahrain Rear Adm. Mohammed Yousif Al Asam, commander of the Royal Bahrain Naval Force, greets Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Gantz during a visit in February 2022. PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS MARK MAHMOO/US. NAVY high-level military strategy, the Royal Bahrain Naval Force has adopted an approach of continuous development to keep up with these challenges. The strategy of modernizing and developing the Royal Bahrain Naval Force is anchored by several main areas, the most important and prominent of which is the human element. The procurement of modern naval vessels and the retrofitting of current ships with the latest systems ensures the Navy keeps pace with modern naval forces in the region. The other modern systems that support naval operations are radar systems, sensors and early warning systems, in addition to unmanned aircraft and boats that save manpower and provide surveillance of the entire naval theater.

UNIPATH: Why does Bahrain host and take part in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)?

Rear Adm. Mohammed: The Kingdom of Bahrain's geography, which is an archipelago of islands in the middle of the Arabian Gulf, and its historical link to the ocean and global trade, has made Bahrain a strategic maritime center in the Middle East, attracting global trade and maritime industries. Since the last century, Bahrain has provided logistical and administrative support for many vessels in the region, and this has made Bahrain a suitable maritime center for allied navies. That is consistent with the Kingdom of Bahrain's policy of maintaining peace, security and stability in the region to serve economic growth. Since international trade depends primarily on the seas and the oceans - 80% of global trade is maritime — it was only natural that friendly and allied nations have requested the Kingdom of Bahrain be a headquarters for logistics and to provide naval support for these vessels. After



the experiences the region has gone through, the whole world realizes nations must unite to protect international shipping lanes and strategic waterways. One country alone cannot secure them without alliances and international cooperation.

UNIPATH: How important is training between the Royal Bahrain Naval Force and the United States Navy?

Rear Adm. Mohammed: Overarching objectives are shared by the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United States of America, which are to maintain regional maritime security and continue the flow of global trade through strategic waterways. The Bahraini and U.S. navies also operate in international waters in joint areas of operation and work closely with each other. Harmony between navies is important, and ongoing training plays a crucial role in standardizing concepts. Today, we are proud that the level of training attained between both navies is highly competent and continuous throughout the year. We have become partners in working to achieve regional maritime security. The Royal Bahrain Naval Force is the main supporter of CMF as host country for the naval coalition, and today we conduct actual operations and are not restricted to only conducting exercises. We have ships at sea that engage in joint patrols with the various operation forces, including Combined Task Force Sentinel, and we support all these commands with manpower, providing officers and Sailors. We are partners in regional maritime security, and the Royal Bahrain Naval Force's footprint extends from the Arabian Gulf to the Red Sea.

Rear Adm. Mohammed Yousif Al Asam, far right, attends a demonstration of unmanned underwater vehicles similar to ones he's enlisting to help defend national waters. To his right is U.S. Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces.

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS DAWSON ROTH/U.S. NAVY



KAZAKHSTAN GUARDS BORDER WITH NEW DRONES

UNIPATH STAFF

Kazakhstan has received handlaunched remote-controlled unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to monitor its borders for criminal and terrorist activity, the U.S. Embassy in Astana announced in May 2022.

The "Raven" UAV system is used widely by armed forces around the world. Weighing 1.9 kilograms apiece, the drones are lightweight, easy to use and suitable for lowaltitude day and night surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

Ravens transmit color and/ or infrared images in real time to ground control stations and remote surveillance stations. The number of drones the U.S. supplied to Kazakhstan was not reported.

Following the delivery of the UAVs to Kazakhstan, the U.S. Embassy's Department of Military and Security Cooperation sponsored training for Kazakh border guards on how to operate the drones. The training was organized as part of Section 333 of the Partner Countries Capacity Development Program.

Kazakhstan has also procured drones from Turkish drone manufacturer TUSAS. A licensing agreement signed in May 2022 will allow Kazakhstan to manufacture the company's ANKA drones domestically.

This is not the first time Kazakhstan has made efforts to produce military drones at home. Last year, Kazakhstan launched the "Shagala" (Seagull) reconnaissance drone developed by the Kazakh National Defense University.

As Kazakhstan hones its technical expertise to make them, the government expressed its readiness to mass produce military drones.

Sources: Fergana News Agency, AeroVironment, Twitter page of the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan, Eurasianet, The Defense Post





Egypt-South Korean Deal Diversifies Arms Procurement

UNIPATH STAFF

T n a weapons deal worth more than \$1.6 billion, Egypt is set to import South Korean equipment to maintain the fight against local and global terrorism.

A summit held in Cairo between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi led to the announcement that Egypt would buy K9 Thunder 155 mm selfpropelled howitzers from South Korea's Hanwha Defense Co.

The agreement, signed in February 2022, includes a transfer of technology so that Egypt can manufacture some of the artillery through the Egyptian Ministry of Defense and Military Production.

"It is an achievement made through a combination of technological cooperation, collaboration in terms of localized production and pan-government support, which goes beyond just the transactional relationship between the two nations," said Kang Eun-ho, head of the South Korean Defense Acquisition Program Administration.

As part of a plan to upgrade its military, Egypt is building new bases, expanding naval and air power and

importing cutting-edge weapons. Aside from manufacturing arms domestically, Egypt has struck large deals with nations such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Italy.

In November 2021, the U.S. Department of State announced a \$2.5 billion arms sale to Egypt, mostly financed by the U.S. Foreign Military Financing Program. The deal includes 12 Super Hercules C-130 transport aircraft and related equipment as well as air defense radar systems. Sources: Yonhap News Agency, Al-Ahram

Oman Earns Recognition as Trusted Mediator

UNIPATH STAFF

Responding to appeals by the governments of the United Kingdom, Indonesia, India and the Philippines, the Sultanate of Oman facilitated in April 2022 the release of 14 foreigners held hostage in Yemen.

The people freed were seven Indian nationals, three British, a Filipino, an Indonesian and a citizen of Myanmar. Some had been held in solitary confinement, mistreated, and denied visits by relatives.

"After communicating with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to facilitate the issuance of the necessary documents, the freed people were transferred from Sanaa to Muscat on an Oman Royal Air Force plane," the Oman News Agency reported.

One of the British captives, Luke Symons, had been detained illegally without charge or trial since 2017.

"I pay tribute to our Omani and Saudi partners and our team for securing his release," announced Liz Truss, then-U.K. Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs.

Oman often serves as mediator in hostage negotiations and regional diplomacy. Its mediation was not limited to major crises such as Iranian nuclear development and the dispute between Gulf Cooperation Council member states, but also included smaller-scale crises.

The Sultanate, for instance, played an important role in the release of French aid worker Isabelle Prime in August 2015 after she was abducted in Sanaa several months earlier.

Oman has also been negotiating with the Houthis to



Omani Minister of Foreign Affairs Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Al Busaidi, center, receives Yemeni counterpart Ahmad Awad Bin Mubarak, left, in Muscat in June 2021. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

release four Yemeni journalists sentenced to death by the militia in February 2022, about whom Yemen's Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism Moammar al-Eryani said:

"The Houthi militia continues to forcibly hide journalists Abdul-Khaleq Omran, Tawfiq al-Mansoori, Harith Hamid, and Akram al-Walidi for seven years, in harsh detention conditions and deprivation of rights and healthcare, and after they suffer various types of psychological and physical torture, they were sentenced to death on trumped-up charges." sources: Reuters, CNN, AI Jazeera





Pakistani Pilots Train with U.S. Counterparts

UNIPATH STAFF

After a three-year hiatus, the Pakistan Air Force conducted its first bilateral training exercise with the U.S. Air Force during Falcon Talon 2022 from February 28 to March 4.

Formation flying, aerial maneuvers, parachuting and commando raids by Air Force ground forces were among the combat scenarios practiced by participating forces.

Trainers stressed the need for "agile combat employment" among U.S. and Pakistani Air Force personnel, so that they could flex their military skills beyond narrow specializations. In the name of realism, ground crews were called upon to rapidly rearm and refuel aircraft whose engines were still running.

Falcon Talon was the first bilateral training event since 2019 held between the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and the

U.S. Ninth Air Force/Air Forces Central (AFCENT). PAF hosted a two-week multinational aerial exercise called ACES MEET in 2021 in which the U.S. and Saudi Arabia participated with Bahraini, Jordanian and Egyptian officers attending as observers.

"Celebrating the 75th anniversary of U.S. and Pakistan relations, our militaries were happy to increase our interoperability and partner capacity during Falcon Talon," said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. James Sindle, then-U.S. defense attaché to Pakistan.

"Engagements such as live flying with PAF and U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons, as well as exchanges with our maintenance and security forces professionals, ensured our militaries are ready to fight to win today and postured for tomorrow."

The exercise began in late February

Pakistani and U.S. Air Force personnel stand in front of a U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon during Falcon Talon in February 2022.

MASTER SGT. CHRISTOPHER PARR/U.S. AIR FORCE

2022 with the deployment of U.S. Air Force fighter jets at a Pakistani operational base. Falcon Talon stressed "realistic contemporary scenarios" applicable to potential military threats in the region, exercise organizers noted.

Interacting with the combat crews of both air forces, Pakistani Air Marshal Muhammad Zahid Mahmood congratulated participants on the successful completion of the exercise. U.S. and Pakistani officers praised the professionalism of air and ground crews. As a sign of fraternity, Pakistani and U.S. pilots exchanged military patches at the conclusion of Falcon Talon.

Kyrgyzstan Targets Terrorism Online

UNIPATH STAFF

Kyrgyzstani security forces tapped the U.S. State Department's Counter Terrorism Assistance Program (CTAS) to improve their performance countering online terrorist activity.

On April 1, 2022, the U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan completed training with the staff of the Kyrgyz Ministry of the Interior called "Advanced Interrogation Techniques." The five days of training focused on thwarting terrorists who use such cyber-based platforms as social media, smartphones and GPS.

The curriculum also dealt with preventive cybersecurity, data analysis and using a human-rights based community engagement strategy to reduce the appeal of extremist messaging.

The April workshop followed a similar training in February 2022 provided to Kyrgyz law enforcement by the U.S. Embassy.

"The United States and the Kyrgyz Republic are working together to counter the scourge of terrorism wherever it appears, and we look forward to deepening this cooperation in the future," U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officer Eric Ohlerud said at the closing ceremony for the training.

Created in 1983, the CTAS is the U.S. government's main method of training and equipping law enforcement agencies around the world in the fight against terrorism.

Sources: Vecherniy Bishkek, U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan

Tajikistan Seeks U.S. Help To Stop Illegal Drugs

UNIPATH STAFF

In light of increased flows illegal drugs across its borders, the Tajik Drug Control Agency (DCA) has sought the assistance of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

"Due to the changes in the political situation in Afghanistan, reemergence of organized criminal groups in the region, and the increase in drug smuggling through Tajikistan, the Tajik and U.S. authorities expressed their readiness to strengthen bilateral cooperation to address drug trafficking," the DCA announced in March 2022.

Tajik law enforcement agencies seized more than four tons of illegal narcotics in 2021, 68.4% more than seized in 2020, according to the DCA. Notably, the amount of heroin and hashish seized in 2021 was more than twice that of 2020.

The U.S. has stepped up its efforts to help Tajikistan secure its border from illegal arms and drug trafficking, as well as illegal migration. On March 5, 2022, the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe launched a three-year project, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, to address these border problems.

The U.S. Embassy planned to allocate \$900,000 to the project, which will include training of Tajik border guards and improving the infrastructure along the Tajik-Afghan border.

"Since 2002, the U.S. government has delivered various projects to strengthen border security through the renovation or rebuilding of border outposts, border crossing facilities, and three training centers. It has also provided other assistance projects, including equipment upgrades and training to maintain security and stability in Tajikistan," the embassy announced in March 2022.

In March 2022, DCA Chief Khabibullo Vohidzoda appealed to the international community to help his country stem growing threats from Afghanistan, which include trafficking of drugs, weapons and people, terrorist and extremist activities, and other transnational crimes. Sources: Eurasia Daily, Radio Free Europe, U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan, AzerNews







U.S.-Qatar Partnership Reaches New High UNIPATH STAFF

The United States has officially named Qatar as a major non-NATO ally (MNNA), a clear sign of closeness in bilateral relations.

Delivering on a prior pledge he made to the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, U.S. President Joe Biden in March 2022 issued a presidential decla-

Oatari Emir. His **Highness Sheikh** Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, visits the White House in January 2022. RELITERS

ration announcing the upgrade in the partnership between the two countries. The MNNA declaration grants Qatar special economic and military privileges.

Following in the footsteps of Kuwait and Bahrain, Qatar is now the third Arabian Gulf state to become a major U.S. non-NATO ally. Only 16 other countries have been granted that status by American presidents: Australia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Jordan, New Zealand, Thailand, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Bahrain, Philippines, Argentina, Afghanistan and Tunisia.

Although the MNNA does not contemplate a mutual defense clause as exists among NATO members, it does grant the designated country military and financial advantages that other countries do not possess.

Such countries can procure U.S. military equipment, host bilateral and joint military exercises, and exchange defense expertise. Private firms in these countries can bid for contracts to maintain or repair U.S. military equipment.

"It does open up a full new range of opportunities: exercises, operations and, you know, perhaps, the ... acquisition of capabilities as well," Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby said of the Qatar designation.

Besides hosting the U.S. Central Command forward headquarters at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar facilitated peace talks between the U.S. government and the Taliban. Qatar then played a key role in evacuating tens of thousands of Afghans when the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan after the U.S. evacuation.

Sources: AI Jazeera, The New York Times, U.S. Department of Defense, CNN

UZBEKISTAN **Promotes Central Asian** Counterterrorism **Strategy**

UNIPATH STAFF

zbekistan's efforts to bring global attention to international security issues has boosted its leadership role in the region.

Tashkent hosted a high-profile international conference dedicated to implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in early March 2022. The conference brought together leaders from Central Asia, South Asia and Europe, and was an important step toward strengthening regional cooperation to fight terrorism.

The highlight of the conference was when Central Asian countries agreed to jointly combat terrorism by committing to the Tashkent Declaration and the Joint Plan of Action. Signatories included delegates from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

These documents define steps to address terrorism and serious threats to international peace and security. Joining the conference through video, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres praised Central Asian countries for their commitment to a safer world.

A week later at a meeting in Turkey, Uzbek Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov and Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Helga Schmid emphasized the importance of Central Asia's role in implementing the U.N.'s counterterrorism strategy. Part of the discussions in Turkey involved insecurity in Afghanistan.

The Tashkent conference was organized by the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the OSCE, the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies, the U.N. Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and the U.N. Counter-Terrorism Office.

Sources: UzDaily, OSCE, Fergana News Agency, Turkmenistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Jordan Increases Female Military Recruitment

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n April 2022, the Military Women's Training Center in Jordan celebrated the graduation of Class No. 1/2022 for female commissioned and noncommissioned officers. Graduates would join special security units.

The six-week course included physical fitness, first aid, marksmanship, martial skills, close quarters combat, and mountaineering skills for missions in rough terrain.

"The armed forces seek to enable military women and refine their military skills by holding specialized courses to bring them to a high degree of professionalism so they can carry out their duties with efficiency and competence," Lt. Col. Salman al-Akalik, commander of the women's training center, said in a speech at graduation.

Starting in the 1950s, the late King Hussein bin Talal encouraged women to participate in the military given his firm belief in the principle of equality of opportunity among men and women.

Nevertheless, the percentage of women serving in the Jordanian Armed Forces/Arab Army remained low until the establishment of the Princess Muna College of Nursing in 1962, from which the first batch of female cadets graduated in 1965 with the rank of second lieutenant.

Women's participation has continued to grow, accelerated by Jordan's establishment of the Directorate of Women's Military Affairs in 1995. This directorate was entrusted with the responsibilities of all women's affairs in the Armed Forces. It examines the military laws applicable to women and makes necessary amendments, develops teaching methods and training programs, encourages and motivates new recruits, and provides them with opportunities to affiliate with military branches previously restricted to men.

Sources: Jordan Armed Forces/Arab Army





U.S. Reaffirms Commitment to Iraqi Security

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Reaffirming the United States's commitment to the security and prosperity of Iraq, Commander of U.S. Central Command Gen. Michael E. Kurilla paid a twoday visit to Iraq in April 2022.

During his visit, Gen. Kurilla met with military and civilian leaders, led by then-Iragi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. A statement by al-Kadhimi's office said that the two officials discussed bilateral security and military cooperation, the ongoing war on terrorism, and the latest operations of the Iraqi Armed Forces against Daesh remnants.

Al-Kadhimi underlined the importance of maintaining the momentum in the war on terrorism and preventing Daesh cells from growing.

"After the global coalition's mission against terrorism has shifted to train, advise, assist and building the capacity of the Iraqi military, we must continue to pursue and eradiate Daesh remnants," al-Kadhimi said.

For his part, Gen. Kurilla commended the Iraqi security forces' combat skills and capacity to implement field operations exploiting the full potential of the Iraqi air forces.

To guide overall U.S. political, economic, cultural and security ties with Iraq, the two nations in December 2008 signed the Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relationship of Friendship and Cooperation (SFA).

The SFA is designed to help the Iraqi people stand on their own, reinforce Iraqi sovereignty, normalize the U.S.-Iragi relationship with strong economic, diplomatic, cultural and security cooperation, and serve as the foundation for a long-term bilateral relationship based on mutual goals.

Honoring its commitment to the security and stability of Iraq and at the Iraqi government's invitation, the U.S. on September 10, 2014, announced the formation of a broad international coalition about 80 nations — to defeat Daesh and liberate Iraqi territories Daesh occupied in June 2014.

As a result, Iraq declared victory over the physical "caliphate" in December 2017, after Iragi forces dislodged its last remnants from its cities. And in March 2019, Daesh lost its last remaining stronghold in the eastern town of Baghouz, Syria, and its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was killed seven months later by coalition forces.

Sources: Asharg al-Awsat, Al Jazeera, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad



KUWAIT IMPROVES DELIVERY OF JUSTICE

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To enhance access to justice and cope with delays caused by COVID-19, Kuwait installed a video teleconferencing system in its Central Prison in April 2022 to conduct court proceedings in virtual courtrooms.

A view of the Kuwait Palace of Justice. the country's main courthouse REUTERS

The Kuwaiti Supreme Judicial Council stressed the importance of expediting court proceedings and the necessity of holding sessions to decide unpostponable cases, such as those related to family matters.

Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice for Information Technology Hashim al-Qallaf noted that the judiciary has televised and digitalized many services to serve justice and facilitate court proceedings for litigants.

The changes affected more than just the Central Prison and the courtrooms of the Palace of Justice. "A few days ago, the service of paying bail online, electronic filings of initial pleadings and electronic announcements were launched," the undersecretary said.

COVID-19 — whose quarantine requirements caused delays in judicial proceedings — provided the spark for adopting remote technology in the court system.

Kuwait's legal system consists of a mixture of English common law, French civil law, Egyptian civil law and Islamic law. The country ranks among the world's wealthiest and boasts a low crime rate. Sources: Al-Anba, Al-Jarida



Saudi Arabia Aims To Upgrade Domestic Aircraft Industry

UNIPATH STAFF

影淀机制

The Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI) consortium signed a preliminary agreement with U.S. aircraft manufacturer Boeing to establish a joint venture to repair helicopters in the kingdom.

According to SAMI Chief Executive Walid Abu Khaled, the wholly owned Saudi Public Investment Fund recently signed partnership agreements with 14 companies, three of which are among the largest in the world, during the World Defense Show (WDS).

"The maintenance of the rotary fleets operated in the kingdom by different forces represents a major opportunity for localization and development of new sustainable skills," Abu Khaled said.

As part of an effort to localize

defense procurements set forth in its Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia hosted the WDS in Riyadh in March 2022 with the participation of more than 800 exhibitors and 15 international pavilions.

"This joint venture will help enable more defense manufacturing to take place in Saudi Arabia, ensuring more jobs and prosperity in the kingdom," SAMI Chairman Ahmed al Khateeb said of the Boeing deal.

The Boeing deal will allow Saudi Arabia to maintain, repair and overhaul its helicopters domestically. "We are proud of the long-standing 77-year relationship that Boeing has with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," said Torbjorn Sjogren, vice president of Boeing's International Government and Defense organization. Exhibitors display equipment at the World Defense Show in Riyadh in March 2022. REUTERS

The Saudi government recognizes the need to further strengthen the already strong partnerships with its allies not only to combat global terrorism, but also to support its economy by creating more jobs for a growing population and to localize military procurements.

To this end, Saudi Vision 2030 includes a plan to localize half of military purchases by 2030, using SAMI as its main engine for developing its defense industry. SAMI employs 2,400 workers and 500 engineers.

Sources: Al Arabiya, Riyadh Daily

UAE Intensifies Diplomacy To Improve Regional Security

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Co-chaired by Abu Dhabi Crown Prince His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn al-Hussein of Jordan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi attended a tripartite summit in April 2022 to address security challenges in the region.

Topics at the Cairo summit focused on a joint Arab response to regional crises, as well as ways to improve food and energy security.

The Cairo meeting came on the heels of a sixnation summit held in March 2022 in southern Israel that brought together the foreign ministers of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Bahrain, Israel and the United States.

They discussed the Arab-Israeli normalization agreement, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the

Iranian nuclear program, and updates on related negotiations in Vienna. Several Egyptian commentators highlighted the regional interest in preventing Iran from using military proxies in places such as Syria to foment violence and disunity.

The foreign ministers agreed to strengthen relations and establish a permanent forum for the participating countries, with the possibility of leaving membership open to other countries interested in joining.

The UAE, represented by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, also participated in a quadripartite summit in Aqaba, Jordan, in March 2022. The main participants were King Abdullah, Egyptian President el-Sisi and then-Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. Sources: Al Khaleej Online, Elaph

Turkmenistan Addresses Refugee Crisis

UNIPATH STAFF

An international seminar in Turkmenistan about humanitarian assistance to refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons — all the more relevant with the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan — drew attendance from four Central Asian nations in March 2022.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) invited dozens of officials from around the region to Turkmenistan's capital of Ashgabat. In addition to attendees from border agencies in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, participants came from the OSCE, the United Nations, nongovernmental organizations, and the EU-funded Border Management Assistance Program in Central Asia.

John MacGregor, head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, stressed the importance of comprehensive migration management at the regional level.

"All over the world, millions of people are moving, most often involuntarily, as a result of man-made or environmental shocks, including the OSCE region. Therefore, promoting an effective migration policy is an area of strategic importance for stability and economic growth," MacGregor said.

The officials from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan shared their countries' best practices in migration management. Attendees highlighted intergovernmental and interagency cooperation in managing migration, noting that cross-border movement of people is a characteristic feature of the 21st century and will remain so in the future.

Sponsored by the government of Norway, the seminar was part of an OSCE project called "Strengthening Border Service Capacities in Turkmenistan." Source: OSCE



Lebanese Security Forces Combat Drug Trafficking

UNIPATH STAFF

Lebanese security forces disrupted a major drug trafficking operation in a raid on the home of a drug lord with operations in the district of Matn, Mount Lebanon governorate, and the district of Keserwan, Keserwan-Jbeil governorate.

A search of the drug trafficker's house uncovered stacks of money, packaging material and large amounts of imported cocaine.

Lebanese security forces have a long history of hunting down drug dealers and illicit crop farmers. During the instability and turmoil resulting from the civil war in Lebanon from 1975 to 1990, militias often used drug sales to increase power and influence.

In those years of turmoil, Lebanon's Bekaa Valley produced annually up to 1,000 tons of hashish and 50 tons of opium to make heroin.

Despite Lebanese successes in suppressing the illegal trade in the years after the country's civil war, the outbreak of war in Syria in 2011 stimulated production of narcotics again. Criminals established operations on an industrial scale in the Lebanese regions bordering Syria. Fertile soil and favorable climate made the Bekaa Valley ideal for cannabis cultivation. Lebanese security forces have struck back. The most noteworthy drug seizure was the discovery in 2020 of 25 tons of hashish en route to the Port of Beirut for shipment to Africa.

In October 2018, security forces killed Ali Zaid Ismail, a notorious drug lord, along with seven others who had exchanged fire with a detachment from the Lebanese army in the town of Hamoudia in northeastern Lebanon. Sources: Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera

Workers cultivate cannabis at a plantation in the village of Yammouneh in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley. AFP/GETTY IMAGES





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