

Protecting Youth  
From Radicalization

Retaking the  
City of Fallujah

Jordan Hosts  
Eager Lion Exercise

# UNIPATH



**COOPERATIVE  
SECURITY**





A mounted Kyrgyz berkutchi (eagle hunter) holds a golden eagle during the World Nomad Games in the Kyrchin (Semenovskoe) gorge in September 2016.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES





Saudis exhibit works during the Janadriyah heritage and culture festival in Al-Thamama, north of Riyadh, in February 2016.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



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UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION

## UNIPATH

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## KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE



**I**t is an honor to accept an invitation from U.S. Central Command to present this latest edition of *Unipath* magazine. The theme of this issue — cooperative security — is a topic that military leaders such as myself have embraced in our professional lives. At a time when terrorists draw recruits from around the world, it's only natural that the coalitions aligned against them work even more effectively as a team.

In the Jordan Armed Forces (JAF), cooperative security is critical to our mission. Each year since 2011, my nation has hosted the Eager Lion military exercise in a successful effort to conduct training and build interoperability with strategic partners such as the United States. An article about the 2016

exercise is included in this magazine.

One focus of this year's Eager Lion was civil-military cooperation, a recognition that all parts of government are responsible for security. That includes the police who track criminals, the paramedics and firefighters who respond to emergencies, and the aid workers who tend to Syrian refugees.

Jordan also exhibits a commitment to cooperation through its Peace Operations Training Center, which opened in 1996 and is operated by the JAF Directorate of Joint Training. The peace center provides academic and practical training for Soldiers and police officers participating in United Nations peacekeeping missions abroad. Its services aren't limited to Jordanians — it has been accredited by NATO to train personnel from all over the world.

I'm proud to say that Jordan has supplied more than 70,000 peacekeepers to missions as far away as Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Sudan. My nation has also sent specially trained engagement teams to Afghanistan to meet with villagers and counteract the lies about Islam promoted by terrorists. Twelve military field hospitals were deployed to provide medical care in a number of countries.

The Amman Message proclaimed by His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of Jordan highlights the role my country has played in combating terrorism at the ideological and religious levels. All too often, criminals such as those in Daesh have manipulated and distorted passages from holy texts to warp the minds of naive young recruits. The Amman Message reaffirms to the world the Islamic principles of tolerance and mercy.

I am certain the articles contained in this issue of *Unipath* will provoke interesting discussions about military and security topics that concern us all. Whenever we discuss cooperative security, we must always keep in mind the challenges and threats we face now and in the future. The editorial staff is eager to read your comments and ideas about this and other editions of the magazine. They can be reached by email at [centcom.unipath@mail.mil](mailto:centcom.unipath@mail.mil).

**Maj. Gen. Mohammad Salem Jaradat,**  
*Chief of staff of training, Jordan Armed Forces*





Victorious Iraqi security forces gather in Fallujah in June 2016. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





# FREEDOM

FOR

## Fallujah

### THE CITY'S LIBERATION BY IRAQI FORCES REPRESENTS ANOTHER MAJOR VICTORY

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UNIPATH STAFF

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Fallujah is the city of mosques and home to many Arab tribes. Its liberation from Daesh by brave Iraqi forces and local tribes in June 2016 returned a sense of normalcy to this historic city of generous guest houses on the banks of the Euphrates. The scent of Arabic coffee mixed with cardamom that once filled the air has now returned. The liberation vanquished Daesh's sick dream of humiliating the sheikhs, wiping out tribal traditions and demeaning the dignity of the people. The Iraqi flag flies proudly in Fallujah after the defeat of Daesh. The successful operation has united Iraqis.

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**UNIPATH INTERVIEWED  
TWO MILITARY  
LEADERS BEHIND THE  
LIBERATION: STAFF  
GEN. TALIB SHAGHATI  
ALKENANI, COMMANDER  
OF COMBINED JOINT  
OPERATIONS COMMAND,  
AND STAFF LT. GEN. ABD  
ALWAHAB AL-SAIDI,  
FORCE COMMANDER  
OF THE FALLUJAH  
OPERATION.**



**UNIPATH: What made the Fallujah battle different from others?**

**GEN. ALKENANI:** We noticed overwhelming cooperation and collaboration at the highest level among all military forces, police and tribesmen. There was tremendous teamwork among coalition airpower and the Iraqi Air Force and military aviation. All this took place in a fairly crowded and small area, yet we were very precise, maintaining the least collateral damage, and never recorded a single friendly-fire incident. In addition, the battle met all its objectives in record time. It was a courageous battle. We deployed all lessons learned from the past 10 years of war against terror. It's widely known that counterterrorism is not conventional warfare. Nevertheless, our forces were able to adapt to the battle rhythm and defeat the enemy.

**LT. GEN. AL-SAIDI:** We had four objectives in liberating the city. The first objective was to evacuate civilians out of harm's way with limited casualties. We accomplished this with significant success, rescuing approximately 90,000 citizens. The second objective was to conduct the battle with minimum casualties, and we were successful in this. The third was to destroy enemy forces. We met this objective and destroyed the majority of their weapon systems and equipment and cost Daesh 2,500 casualties. The fourth was to protect and avoid damage to infrastructure, which we achieved as well. In addition, we had a desire to meet our objectives in the shortest time possible. We won the battle in 32 days, whereas we had initially estimated it would take 60 days.

**UNIPATH: How challenging was the liberation of Fallujah?**

**GEN. ALKENANI:** The big challenge was that Daesh used innocent civilians as human shields so it could spin its propaganda when civilians were killed during the battle and blame Iraqi Armed Forces. They set explosives on the bridges and inside government institutions and hospitals so that Iraqi

forces could take the blame. But we swiftly overran them before they detonated their bombs and defeated their evil plan.

**LT. GEN. AL-SAIDI:** I agree with Gen. Alkenani that the biggest and most important challenge was protecting civilians and evacuating them from the battlefield. Another challenge was the terrain of the battlespace and the massive number of IEDs on the roads.

**UNIPATH: How did your forces perform in the battle?**

**GEN. ALKENANI:** I think the cooperation among the different forces was outstanding. We were fully prepared and ready before the battle. We witnessed harmony among units on the battlefield, whether they were Army, counterterrorism, police, volunteer or tribal units. Such coordination requires training to eliminate friendly fire. We achieved it in record time and attained all phases of our plan.

**UNIPATH: Tell us more about coordination between coalition airpower and Iraqi ground forces.**

**GEN. ALKENANI:** I would like to praise the fantastic and critical role coalition airpower played in Fallujah and previous battles. This partnership with our friends in the U.S. resulted in tremendous success. They played a significant role in reconnaissance and target selection and provided the close support that is essential to winning battles.

**LT. GEN. AL-SAIDI:** The role of coalition airpower was tremendous and continued around the clock as the battle progressed. They never delayed in responding to requests. We asked, and a minute later we would hear the roar of the F-18 engines. Coalition airpower completed half of the battle. I also would like to mention the crucial role of reconnaissance aircraft that worked for months before the battle and during the battle to provide details about the enemy's positions, IEDs, command and control and even the total number of Daesh fighters, which helped us cross-check our intelligence reports.



A tank clears the way as Iraqi forces liberate Fallujah in June 2016.



Iraqis celebrate after the liberation.

**UNIPATH:** Can you provide more details about the evacuation of civilians before the battle?

**GEN. ALKENANI:** We established a great deal of cooperation with the local governments of Anbar province and other governmental agencies to locate safe havens for internally displaced people (IDP) in Amriyat Al-Fallujah and Habaniya city. We established safe routes by providing air cover over them. The brave men of Army aviation dropped leaflets to guide residents to leave the city using the noted routes.

**LT. GEN. AL-SAIDI:** Despite Daesh restrictions and checkpoints to keep residents hostage, we were able to destroy their checkpoints and assure safe routes. We provided buses and semi-trucks to move civilians and their belongings. Additionally, we established a committee from military and government agencies to oversee the IDP camps and provide potable water, medicine and food. We requested daily reports during the morning military briefings to track displaced people and camp operations. Fallujah is a crowded city, and the majority of its residents couldn't flee during the Daesh invasion. They became hostages in the hands of the terrorists. We successfully evacuated approximately 90,000 civilians and freed them from the threat of Daesh torture and beheadings. Our fighters played two roles: fighting Daesh and protecting civilians. Our brave men provided food, water and first aid for the injured civilians. Our forces established a firewall to prevent Daesh from re-entering the residential areas.

**UNIPATH:** Were there any surprises that made you alter your plans?

**LT. GEN. AL-SAIDI:** None at all. We were successful in luring the enemy into following our plan. My goal

was to pull them out of their trenches and tunnels. We would fool them by feigning retreats. When they followed us in an attempt to disable our movements, they became easy targets for the Iraqi Air Force and coalition airpower. I would like to express my gratitude to the excellent role of coalition airpower in destroying Daesh's defenses and formations; they successfully destroyed 60 percent of Daesh's capabilities.

**UNIPATH:** How did you deliver humanitarian aid to besieged civilians?

**GEN. ALKENANI:** Our Soldiers shared their own battle supplies with civilians after they witnessed the harsh living conditions. The terrorists looted the civilians' stored food supplies and left them and their children starving. This is another vicious crime they committed. Daesh stole food from residents and slept with full stomachs while nearby children wailed with hunger. We saw weak children looking almost like ghosts. We gave orders to field commanders to make fighters check on the civilians in their area of responsibility and provide food and medical attention until the battle was over and responsibilities were handed over to local government. Despite ferocious fighting, military tanker trucks delivered drinking water to civilians.

**LT. GEN. AL-SAIDI:** We were part of a united effort with the central and local governments. Humanitarian aid was kept in a safe area outside of Fallujah awaiting the end of the battle. Our part was to secure routes and provide security to convoys to reach local government buildings. After my forces reached the heart of Fallujah, they were surprised to see many civilians trapped and seeking urgent help. Our fighters provided water and food and secured their location until we cleared the area and transported them to Amriyat Al-Fallujah IDP camp.



**UNIPATH: Did Daesh try to promote a hostile media campaign to counter Iraqi forces?**

**GEN. ALKENANI:** Quite frankly, not only in the Fallujah operation but in all battles to defeat Daesh there are enemy propaganda campaigns spread by sectarian satellite TV stations and Daesh sympathizers. It has become clear to the people that terrorist groups — especially Daesh — exploit media to spread their lies to psychologically impact civilians and the Armed Forces. Thank God, our forces are immune, coherent and aware of Daesh's tricks. We noticed their misleading propaganda on social media and unfortunately on some regional satellite stations to portray Fallujah as a victim and claim Iraqi forces were targeting residential areas. Luckily we were able to liberate Fallujah swiftly and escort the international media into the city and show the real story to the world. Based on my observation during my drive through Fallujah, damage to infrastructure and residential areas was isolated and limited. During the planning phase we were careful to avoid targeting Daesh locations near residential areas. However, despicable voices tried to deceive the populace and ignite sectarian war in the region. Our citizens realized that the security forces were there to protect them. The counterterrorism units were the first force that entered the city and carried the oldest and sickest citizens on their backs to get them out of harm's way. The satellite channels showed a soldier crawling in the dirt to form a human step so that a woman from Fallujah could step down from a military truck. Our Soldiers used their vehicles to transport women and children from the fighting areas to safe havens.

**UNIPATH: Did the terrorists attempt to flee the battlefield with civilians?**

**GEN. ALKENANI:** After liberating the cities, we conducted normal procedures to count the residents and confirm the young men's identities to make sure no terrorists were hiding among them. The residents voluntarily provided valuable information about terrorists. Young men stood up bravely and pointed their fingers to a person sitting with them and shouted, "He is Daesh, and he committed crimes against innocents." Most of the time the person was in fact a terrorist and wanted by law enforcement. This scenario was repeated many times, which confirmed that the residents lived through horrific nights at the hands of Daesh and wanted to report them to our forces. Sometimes the suspected terrorists denied the allegations and defended themselves. However, many people stood up and said, "You are a liar; you killed my brother," and gave details about the crime. The residents refused to allow the criminals to hide among them.

**LT. GEN. AL-SAIDI:** Indeed, the residents reported many

terrorists. In Fallujah, one of my group commanders was tasked with gathering residents and checking their identities before transporting them to the refugee camp. Fortunately, the counterterrorism media team was filming when a woman stood up and pointed to a young man sitting toward the end and said, "He is Daesh and killed many innocents." Then people stood up and agreed with her.

**UNIPATH: What was the role of tribal fighters in Fallujah?**

**GEN. ALKENANI:** The bravery of tribesmen played a big role in liberating areas. Their presence with liberating forces gave comfort to residents, because these men are their neighbors and brothers. In addition, it established trust between our forces and civilians and countered terrorist lies. With their horrific experiences and what they went through, tribal fighters know the terrorists well, know Daesh's tactics and its hideouts. They also are experts on battlefield terrain and therefore play an essential role in defeating terror and protecting civilians. These brave men played a significant role in capturing explosives factories and weapon caches and tunnels. They enjoy high morale and fight ferociously in their eagerness to liberate their hometowns.

**LT. GEN. AL-SAIDI:** I had two battalions from the Anbar police, and they fought bravely with my special operations forces until they received orders to move to Ramadi. We also maintained communication with tribal figures inside the denied areas who provided valuable intelligence that helped pinpoint terrorist hideouts.

**UNIPATH: What is the strategic significance of liberating Fallujah?**

**GEN. ALKENANI:** There is symbolic and strategic meaning to Fallujah — the terrorists used it to recruit and boost morale. Defeating them in Fallujah is a huge blow to Daesh. We witnessed significant desertions and collapsing morale in the final stage of the battle. The entire world saw the huge convoy that fled Fallujah and became an easy target for coalition and Iraqi air forces. We refuted the cheap propaganda about their bravery; it is all lies and baseless claims.

**LT. GEN. AL-SAIDI:** The Fallujah battle united Iraqis and made them proud of their Armed Forces. Most important, this battle destroyed the "undefeatable Daesh legend." Future battles will be much easier because Daesh lost its logistical capabilities. Fallujah was its "bastion of morale," and that bastion was defeated and Daesh's propaganda machine smashed. In an attempt to tarnish the glory of victory, they carried out cowardly attacks on innocents in Karada. But we will make Daesh pay the price for this despicable crime. ♦

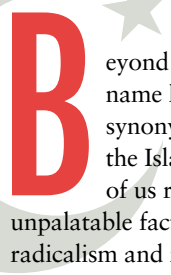


# PAKISTAN ASSAILS **TERRORISTS**

SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS MUST COOPERATE TO ACHIEVE FINAL  
VICTORY IN THE BATTLE AGAINST VIOLENT EXTREMISM



*By Pervaiz Asghar,* REAR ADMIRAL (RET.), PAKISTAN NAVY



Beyond its shores, Pakistan's fair name has unfortunately become synonymous with terrorism of the Islamic variety. Though most of us remain in defiant denial, the unpalatable fact is that the rising tide of radicalism and religious exclusivity that has continued to envelop us in its embrace since the early 1980s has forced its way unhindered into the national consciousness.

This wasn't always so; the few hiccups encountered earlier — like the anti-Ahmadi riots of 1953 — were born more out of political expediency and inadequacy rather than an inherent sense of intolerance.

The wars in Afghanistan are among the biggest reasons for the current state of affairs. After the Soviet Union left, the situation in Afghanistan became even more chaotic as the disparate terrorist groups started jockeying for power. The ensuing instability gave rise to the Taliban movement, which mostly included in its ranks the Afghan war orphans groomed in radical madrassas that had mushroomed along Pakistan's western borders.

As the Taliban kept notching up one victory after another and their ranks swelled with fresh recruits, their ambitions became loftier. So after consolidating themselves in the south, including the capital, Kabul, they turned their sights with a vengeance northward toward the Uzbek, Tajik, Turkmen and Hazara majority regions, thereby lending the civil conflict an ethnic flavor.

By the time the horrifying events of 9/11 unfolded, the Taliban had overrun most of Afghanistan and were knocking on the doors of the Panjsher valley, the

last bastion of resistance. Though the 9/11 bombers were non-Afghans, the coalition homed in on what it determined to be the source of the planning, namely al-Qaida in Afghanistan. Remnants of al-Qaida and the Taliban that survived the air and land blitz retreated into mountainous hideouts along the Pakistan-Afghan border and ultimately found their way to Pakistan's tribal areas through a porous border that has never been much of a hindrance for the Pashtun tribes living on either side.

Shielded from the public eye and free from any governmental interference, the next few years enabled al-Qaida to become fully entrenched in the Waziristan tribal belt and ingratiate itself with the locals through a lavish display of money, which enabled it to cast its net of violent ideology both near and far. The capture of a large number of high-ranking al-Qaida leaders (who had gone underground in the major cities of Pakistan) and selected operations against the foreign fighters in South Waziristan led to two back-to-back attacks against then-President Pervez Musharraf in late 2003. The large-scale clampdown that followed the assassination attempts forced the terrorist groups, which had coalesced under the guidance of al-Qaida, to lash out in all directions.

The Pakistan Army's abortive attempts to assert control over the Wana subdivision of South Waziristan, where many foreign extremists had been dug in, led to the signing of the infamous Shakai peace agreement of April 2004, which helped shore up the image of a terrorist named Nek Muhammad, who emerged from the

distasteful episode as something of a hero. Al-Qaida's policy of propping up independent-minded ambitious youngsters in leadership roles was apparently paying off; generous doses of SUVs, arms and money to selected individuals loyal to al-Qaida ultimately led to the elimination of the traditional roles exercised by the tribal elders for preserving the peace.

From 2004 onward, mayhem ruled. It was as if Pakistan had given in to the forces of darkness, for whom no target was off limits, with indoctrinated suicide bombers being the weapon of choice. Apart from targeting senior military officers, including a corps commander, the terrorists also assassinated a former prime minister, Benazir Bhutto. Shia, for whom the criminals of the Wahhabi-Salafi-Deobandi orientation shared a major dislike, were hit the hardest, with the Hazara community of Quetta being so brutalized that members were forced to either flee or remain virtually ghettoized. The type of targets chosen were unimaginably diverse: Sunni Sufis, moderate Islamic scholars, liberal intellectuals, mosques, churches, minorities, graveyards, shrines, schools, marketplaces, courts of law, buses, military, law enforcement agencies and intelligence installations.

And just when the world was fooled into thinking that al-Qaida and the Taliban had become irrelevant, it received a rude shock in the form of a summer offensive in 2006. Stung by allegations of complicity, the Pakistan Army's first serious effort to restore the writ of the state in its tribal areas the next year (Operation Rah-e-Haq) was blunted by the clerics of the Red Mosque (Lal Masjid) in the center of Islamabad, who continued to embarrass the state by issuing fatwas (religious opinions) against the Armed Forces and carrying out vigilante-style antics. After having exhausted all means to talk sense into the clerics, who enjoyed a sizable following in terrorist circles and substantial support within the levers of power, the government was forced to storm the large mosque-madrassas-hostel complex in July 2007, killing all those who had refused to vacate the premises.

Al-Qaida, whose presence in Waziristan had radicalized the tribesmen, used the Lal Masjid episode to galvanize the extremists into forming a broad-based coalition under the banner of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to coordinate attacks against the state. Apart from undertaking terrorist attacks within Pakistan, the group, faced with the practical necessity of generating funds to sustain itself, indulged in drug trafficking, gun running, extortion, ransoms and even bank robberies.

The TTP upped the ante by taking violence to a whole new level. The threat that it now posed to Kabul from the northeast compelled NATO and Pakistani forces to launch a joint operation code-named Lionheart, also known as Sherdil, from opposite sides of the Pak-Afghan border. Al-Qaida even

managed to infiltrate the Khyber Agency, traditionally a stronghold of the followers of the more tolerant Sufi Barelvi school of Islam.

Amid all this excitement, Pakistan failed to notice that a young firebrand cleric, whose continual sermons on a mobile FM radio transmitter about the virtues of "Islamic" governance and the pressing need for speedy justice, had touched a raw nerve among the citizens of Swat, part of the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas. However, alarm bells rang when the TTP, facilitated by the popular Mullah Fazlullah, took over the





scenic valley and replaced the civil functionaries with those from among its own cadre, letting loose a reign of terror.

The nation went into shock when it was reported that the terrorists were also approaching the capital of Islamabad from another northerly direction. As the Army took action and reversed these gains, Mullah Fazlullah escaped to Afghanistan, where he set up camp for his anti-Pakistan activities.

The new government in Pakistan in mid-2013

tried to initiate a dialogue with the local Taliban rather than taking it head-on, even when it became obvious the Taliban was just stalling. A major terrorist attack on Karachi Airport a year later was for all intents and purposes like any other. But as far as the Army's reaction was concerned, it wasn't. It immediately launched a full-scale attack on North Waziristan, where extremists of all shades under the umbrella of al-Qaida were holding sway. The senseless retaliatory attack on an Army-run public school

**Pakistanis take part in a rally in Karachi in June 2014 supporting the Army's operations against the Taliban in the North Waziristan tribal agency.**

AFP/GETTY IMAGES





**Students take a computer class at the Wana Institute of Technical Training in South Waziristan. The course is part of the Pakistan Army's campaign to "win hearts and minds" through dialogue, education and creating commercial opportunities.**

REUTERS

on the outskirts of Peshawar, resulting in the wanton slaughter of 140 students, proved to be the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back; the government was forced to prepare a National Action Plan to combat terrorism on all fronts. Though it's premature to gauge the scale of success achieved, statistics reveal a sharp drop of up to 60 percent in the number of terrorist incidents in 2015, compared with the previous year.

A significant number of Pakistanis are now increasingly looking to the future with hope. The military has achieved the unthinkable by establishing the writ of the government in almost the entire tribal belt, including the Shawal Valley, located strategically at the confluence of Afghanistan and North and South Waziristan. The government has now turned its attention to South Punjab, long a hotbed of extremism and sectarianism, which had escaped scrutiny thus far. The riverine areas at

the confluence of the provinces of Baluchistan, Sindh and Punjab, which served as the hideout of various criminal and sectarian gangs, have recently been cleansed. The military has now signaled its intent to target the hideouts and sleeper cells of the terrorists throughout the country. Karachi, the most industrialized city in Pakistan, which had been brought to the brink of anarchy through systematic extortion, kidnapping for ransom, bank robberies and target killings conducted by criminal and sectarian gangs, is now regaining a semblance of normality, thanks to the Army's initiative under the National Action Plan. The province of Baluchistan likewise was increasingly becoming ungovernable but has been stabilized to a large extent. It is no wonder then that Chief of Army Staff Gen. Raheel Sharif has arguably become the most popular figure in the country because of his sense of patriotism and devotion.

Though many countries still look toward

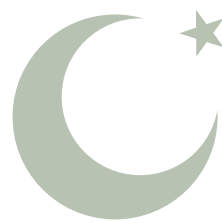


Pakistan with unease, within the country a feeling of hope has begun to emerge. An enabling environment has finally been created where civil voices striving for openness and tolerance can be more easily heard, despite some of them still being silenced. After a very long time, issues relating to the rights of minorities are being openly discussed. Surprising as it may seem, women are at the forefront of the movement for change, pushing boundaries as never before: Malala Yousafzai became the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize; Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy won two back-to-back Oscars for documentaries highlighting socially disturbing issues; Muniba Mazari has been made the United Nation's Goodwill Ambassador Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; Fiza Farhan has been appointed to the U.N.'s first panel on women empowerment and enjoys the distinction of being included in the *Forbes* Top 100 list of women entrepreneurs under 30.

Having said that, no country should ever forget that its primary duty is to look after the welfare of its citizens. Pakistan's budgetary allocations toward health and education are often viewed as inadequate. These vital sectors have been supported by the desperately needed involvement of social workers, philanthropists and nongovernmental organizations. Regardless of how well a country is able to protect its borders, its future is doomed unless it is able to significantly invest in its human resources and reap the benefits. With a burgeoning population and youth bulge, the focus should be on revitalizing our economy to create at least enough jobs every year to keep the current rampant unemployment in check. Nepotism, which is the lifeblood of many elitist systems, needs to be replaced by an open, merit-based system. The menace of corruption, long taken for granted, has to be confronted.

The setting up of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, under whose aegis Pakistan has promised to do whatever it can to bring the Afghan Taliban leadership to the dialogue table, is a good beginning to create lasting peace. Its efforts, however, were stymied by the massive truck bombing in April 2016 in the heart of Kabul, for which the Haqqani Network and its publicized links with Pakistan were brought under scrutiny. Since the U.S. shares this perception, with NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Kabul dubbing the Haqqanis the most lethal terrorist group in the area, the onus to allay such suspicions falls on Pakistan. An open discussion on our mutual grievances in the context of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group is necessary.

Stability, not only in Afghanistan but also within Pakistan, is a prerequisite for progress. Over the past decade or so, no other country beyond a declared war zone has been subjected to as many terrorist



## A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PAKISTANIS ARE NOW INCREASINGLY LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH HOPE.

incidents as Pakistan. The country had reached a point where nothing was safe, not even educational institutions or places of worship. The relief afforded by the launch of Operation Zarb-e-Azb in mid-2014 needs to be augmented by truly combating terrorism “in all its forms and manifestations” as the official phrase goes. Nonmilitary aspects of the National Action Plan — judicial reforms, curbs on hate literature, protection of minorities, development work and administrative reforms in the tribal areas — deserve dedicated focus.

Pakistan needs friends and can ill afford to keep shrugging off the oft-voiced allegations about its flirtations with selected terrorists. Perceptions matter, and the country needs to allay nagging international concerns about its links with terror outfits like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, the Haqqani Network and the Afghan Taliban's Quetta Shura before it ends up getting completely isolated. Pakistan's future well-being rests on the answer to one crucial question: Do we continue defending dated policies or do we become a more responsible member of a broader community that yearns to take us back? ♦

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Pervaiz Asghar is a retired rear admiral of the Pakistan Navy who established a post-military career as director general of the National Centre for Maritime Policy Research at Babria University. During his 38-year naval career, Adm. Asghar commanded two destroyers, as well as the 25th Destroyer Squadron.*

# A POTENT *partnership*





## JORDAN AND THE UNITED STATES FOCUS ON FORCE INTEGRATION AT EAGER LION 2016

UNIPATH STAFF

**T**here was barely even a bird to break the silence on the bleak volcanic badia, the desert that stretches from western Jordan to the Iraqi border. Dust devils swirled around a village that terrorists had converted into a stronghold.

The skies awakened to the sound of U.S. B-52 bombers, accompanied by two Jordanian F-16 fighter jets, negotiating a bombing run over the enemy positions. From atop a distant desert ridge, Jordanian and American howitzers pounded the terrorist-occupied village, throwing up geysers of dirt and gravel. Minutes later, puffs of yellow dust announced an onslaught of Jordanian and American battle tanks on the terrorist stronghold.

Multinational integration was the word of the day: The 800 Jordanian Soldiers — tank operators, infantry and artillerymen — operated down to the company level with a similar number of U.S. Soldiers and Marines. Together they accomplished their training mission on this last day of Eager Lion 2016, the bilateral exercise hosted by

Jordan and designed to simulate the types of conventional and unconventional threats found in the Middle East.

“In planning an exercise, you always take into consideration the threats and challenges,” said Brig. Gen. Fahad Faleh Ahmad al-Damen, the Jordan Armed Forces director of the joint military training. “It’s not just Daesh. For us, no matter what you call them, they always come from the same ideology that is against our national interests and our common goals.”

Throughout most of its existence, Eager Lion has attracted military forces and observers from more than a dozen countries. However, commanders deliberately focused the 2016 exercise, which ran from May 15 to 24, on bilateral Jordanian-U.S. cooperation. Jordan will host an expanded, multinational Eager Lion in 2017 and from there on out alternate between bilateral and multilateral exercises each year.

“This exercise is exceptional. This is the sixth exercise and has a special flavor, which is bilateral cooperation with the United

Jordanian F-16 fighters escort two U.S. B-52s during a counterterrorism mission near Azraq, Jordan, at the Eager Lion military exercise in May 2016. REUTERS

# a woman WARRIOR

## THE JORDANIAN ARMED FORCES SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATES FEMALE OFFICERS INTO EAGER LION

BY UNIPATH STAFF

**ARMY CAPT. NUSAYBAH SALEH AL-OMARI** was one of two Jordanian female officers who participated in Eager Lion 2016. She is part of a growing number of Jordanian women employed in the security sector as Soldiers, police officers and civil defense workers. These pioneering women have taken part in peacekeeping missions since 2007 in places such as Afghanistan, Libya and Sudan. Capt. Nusaybah took a break from her duties at Eager Lion — where she shared a work tent with her mostly male colleagues — to talk to Unipath about her life in the Jordan Armed Forces.

**Unipath:** What's it like being a woman in the Armed Forces?

**Capt. Nusaybah:** I am very proud to be member of Jordan Armed Forces, to serve my nation, defend its principles and gain the respect of my male colleagues, neighbors and family. I love my job and feel very happy when I wear my uniform every morning as I notice the respectful and admiring looks on the faces of my fellow citizens. I enrolled in the Armed Forces in 2007 after graduating from the university. After completing a year of military training I earned the rank of second lieutenant.

**Unipath:** Which military branches do women serve in?

**Capt. Nusaybah:** In the past, women were permitted only in limited fields like administrative assistance, health and education. But Jordanian women have come a long way and have become battlefield officers. Nowadays, women in the Armed Forces work alongside their male counterparts in almost all fields. The leadership opened many opportunities for women to specialize in fields that were once available only to men. We have females in special operations, the royal guard, the military police and the Air Force.

**Unipath:** What are the challenges for women in the Armed Forces?

**Capt. Nusaybah:** Maybe there are family-related challenges, but I don't think there are any in the workplace. By family issues, I mean the issues that face both females and males serving in the Armed Forces. The women in the Armed Forces exhibit a professionalism and determination that has made them an example for Jordanian women. When it comes to our relationship with men in the military, we have a very good relationship built on professionalism and respect among officers and staff. We treat each other like brothers and sisters and learn and share experiences. The immeasurable support from my fellow officers makes me proud of them all.

**Unipath:** What is your current assignment in the Army?

**Capt. Nusaybah:** I currently work in the directorate of women in the military. This department tracks all

officers, noncommissioned officers and civilians in the Armed Forces.

**Unipath:** What is your role in Eager Lion?

**Capt. Nusaybah:** I am a member of the public affairs team, the cell responsible for all activities regarding displaced people and refugees and the civilians who are impacted by military operations. Our job is to work with them to arrange aid from government and nonprofit organizations and provide help, whether it be financial or physical.

**Unipath:** Tell us about working with your American counterparts.

**Capt. Nusaybah:** Eager Lion is one of the most important exercises for us; it provides vast knowledge and experience to the participants. We learn the culture and traditions of our friends in the United States Armed Forces as well as learn their language. At the same time, they learn Arabic phrases from me and how to interact with local civilians. We discuss and debate many things, including history, culture and the multiethnic environment. One important topic is how to design refugee camps and how to interact with Muslim women in these camps. It made me happy to see my American teammates come to me for advice about any religious or cultural concerns.

**Unipath:** Why did you decide to join the Armed Forces?

**Capt. Nusaybah:** Jordanian society has become very accepting of women in the Armed Forces. In addition, my husband and many of my family members are members of the Armed Forces. That was very encouraging.

**Unipath:** How do you balance work and home?

**Capt. Nusaybah:** I am a mother of three children; everybody in my family is supportive, especially my mother-in-law, who kindly takes care of my young children while I am at work. That helps me cope with work and remain confident that my children are in good hands.

**Unipath:** What is your professional goal?

**Capt. Nusaybah:** I love my job so much that I will continue my journey and hope I will become a general one day. There are many training courses that all members of the Armed Forces are required to take. Working in Armed Forces requires specific skills, physical fitness and knowledge of current technology. I am very committed to continue learning and advance up the ladder of leadership.



Jordanian Army Capt. Nusaybah Saleh Al-Omari  
UNIPATH STAFF



States,” said Jordanian Maj. Gen. Mohammad Salem Jaradat, chief of staff of training. “All our objectives have been met.”

Eager Lion 2016 embraced a wide range of scenarios using Jordan’s diverse geography as a backdrop. Exercise themes included border security, counterterrorism, command and control, cyber defense, evacuating mass casualties, crisis management, strategic communication and maritime protection. About 6,000 service members participated, nearly equally split between Jordan and the U.S.

Marching through the wilderness, integrated special operations forces performed nighttime reconnaissance missions. Jordanian and American helicopters flew side by side, and spotters called in coordinates for air assaults. At the command level, Arabic- and English-speaking staffers huddled under tents to direct training operations.

“As you go through these command posts, you’ll see Jordanian officers and [noncommissioned officers, or NCOs] right next to our officers and NCOs working side by side and working through tactical and operational problems,” Gen. Joseph Votel, commander of U.S. Central Command, said after observing the scene at Eager Lion’s Zarqa command center.

As an example of how the 2016 exercise raised the intensity level over past years, planners staged a first-ever “dirty bomb” event. Teams of Jordanians and Americans wearing protective suits were forced to quarantine and decontaminate a metal box aboard a pickup truck that purportedly contained radiological material. The military was assisted by Jordanian civilian agencies such as the Energy and Minerals Derogatory Commission, an example of Jordan’s whole-of-government approach.

**Members of the Jordanian 77th Marines Battalion advance during an Eager Lion exercise in Al Quweira, Jordan.**

CPL. PAUL S. MARTINEZ/  
U.S. MARINE CORPS



“Jordanian and United States’ teams picked the scenarios that resembled the security challenges in the region and included symmetric and asymmetric operations,” said Brig. Gen. Amjed Al Zoubie, director of Eager Lion’s High Command during the exercise.

At the Al Hussein Medical Center in Amman, Jordan’s biggest hospital, Eager Lion simulated an explosion in a warehouse to test how military and civilian teams handled mass casualties. Billowing smoke and actors writhing and moaning on the ground lent a realistic feel to the spectacle.

“It was obvious the Jordanian medical staff was very interested in simulating an extremely realistic scenario, with the utmost concerns in providing quality casualty care,” said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Mark Ingram, lead surgeon for the Combined Joint Task Force at Eager Lion.

Jordanian 2nd Lt. Dr. Firas Hammoudeh

returned the compliment: “Working with U.S. medical forces during Eager Lion has taught me how they operate, from building daily briefs and reports, to implementing simple to more complex medical procedures. We have shared many ideas with one another, and every year the exercise builds on past evolutions of Eager Lion to only get better.”

Planners didn’t neglect practicing conventional warfare either. In the arid, rolling terrain around the southern Jordanian community of Al Quweira, Jordanian Marines and their U.S. counterparts practiced launching rifle and grenade attacks against trenches.

“We have been training alongside the Marines for the past couple of years, and we want to hold our battalion to the same standards as U.S. Marines,” said 1st Lt. Mahmood Baniomar of the Jordanian 77th Marines Battalion. “Training out here is worth every moment.”





U.S. Marines shared the enthusiasm for the joint training that continued to build interoperability between the two forces.

“I have worked with the Jordanians before in Afghanistan, and they are very spot-on,” a U.S. noncommissioned officer noted. “Our techniques and the way we train are very similar.”

Less noticeable during military maneuvers but equally important to military effectiveness, the U.S. Central Command Partner Network was given a thorough testing during Eager Lion. The network is a secure computer system — with origins dating back to 1999 — designed to increase lines of communication among coalition forces.

“This is the first time we’ve been able to roll it out in a big exercise like this,” Gen. Votel said at Eager Lion. “We’re working through the bugs associated with that but, in general, getting pretty positive results.”

After turning away nations that wanted to send participants and observers to Eager Lion 2016, Jordanian Gen. Fahad offered reassurances that the next exercise in May 2017 would be fully multinational. Jordan and the U.S. began their Eager Lion collaboration in 2011.

“Our partnership with the U.S. is deeply rooted at the strategic level,” Gen. Fahad said. “Every year we are enhancing that by doing exercise Eager Lion and others.” ♦

U.S. Central Command Public Affairs contributed to this article.

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**LEFT: Jordan Armed Forces, U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps forces conduct a live fire exercise during Eager Lion to demonstrate capturing an enemy village. REUTERS**

**Jordanian Brig. Gen. Fahad Faleh Ahmad al-Damen, left, attends an Eager Lion news conference with U.S. Maj. Gen. Ralph Groover, U.S. Central Command’s director of exercises and training. GETTY IMAGES**





Widows gather to receive aid in Baghdad. Daesh tries to deceive women in similar circumstances to carry out terrorist attacks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





# What comes after **DAESH?**

**Postwar counterterrorism strategy must  
prevent teenagers and widows from becoming  
a new generation of terrorists**



**BY DR. HUSSEIN ALAWI**  
CHAIRMAN AND FOUNDER, AKKAD CENTER FOR  
STRATEGIC AFFAIRS AND FUTURE STUDIES

**I**t seems that even if we manage to kill the last of the Daesh fighters, we won't be able to kill the ideology that gave rise to this terrorist group. These ideas can be expected to blossom again and develop into a parasitic entity separate from its host. This parasitic organism will eventually lead to a renewed sense of anxiety and instability and pose a security threat in Iraq and across the world.

That is why we must address the risks and effects of Daesh beyond the international coalition's battlefield successes in Iraq and Syria. This article addresses the issues facing our youth, whom Daesh is recruiting through a program known as "Birds of Paradise," and the phenomenon of radicalized widows known as "Black Widows." It is critical for the Iraqi government and local administrations in liberated cities to develop new programs to combat the terrorist organization and its effects on communities.

Counterterrorism information obtained from numerous documents and curricula attests to Daesh's desire to instill aggressive behaviors and attitudes in new generations. These generations will work to destabilize the military and will target security and political successes in liberated areas, which will become the focal point of continuing Daesh efforts to undermine the Iraqi state. The remnants of Daesh will attempt to fill the void in some cities by courting advocates, sympathizers and the indecisive. This is exactly what encourages the terrorist organization to return in a new form.

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## The government must develop programs that prevent youths from being tricked into believing Daesh's twisted ideology.

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Creating a national/international program to combat terrorism will give the Iraqi people and the government the best opportunity to effectively address this problem. Our efforts must focus not only on the military, but also on education and socialization to combat these dangerous influences. This will happen through global cooperative efforts with the international coalition countries, including the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Australia, Germany, Japan and other nations supporting the national/international program.

The effects of Daesh on adolescents must be addressed. Daesh may target socially isolated

children to create a new generation of terrorists. These adolescents may attempt to kill Iraqis through terrorist attacks. Additionally, Daesh may attempt to capitalize on the widows of terrorists for combat operations.

If ignored, these future seeds of Daesh will come to haunt the Iraqi people and the international community. The question that security analysts and workers must confront in their counterterrorism efforts is: Who are these future seeds?

For a long time, Daesh has relied on individuals to carry out attacks and incite panic and instability. Recruiters provide training in countries such as Iraq, Syria and Libya through social media platforms. These platforms offer theoretical and operational lessons on how to carry out suicide attacks, and they also provide deluded spiritual and ideological lessons.

### Child recruitment

New and terrifying information gathered by the United Nations indicates that Daesh has recruited 900 adolescent soldiers between the ages of 8 and 14 by invoking the Birds of Paradise belief, which asserts that young people who die before reaching adulthood go straight to heaven and are revered as martyrs. They are instructed in religion, fighting and survival in difficult conditions. These adolescent fighters pose a major threat to the world today, especially since they are not exclusively Iraqi or Syrian but rather a mix of nationalities.

Videos posted on social media networks in April, May and June 2016 show multiple images of adolescent terrorists and testify to the danger of this phenomenon. In western Iraq, Daesh used adolescents for combat operations after their defeat in Fallujah exposed an inability to recruit new soldiers. Information provided by the mothers of these children indicates that Daesh provided incentives and privileges to the families of local adolescents fighting with the terrorist organization. Videos broadcast in June 2016 showed adolescent suicide bombers, and photographs from Mosul revealed Daesh's dependence on children.

The terror group goes to great lengths to recruit these children. In May 2016, Daesh issued a phone application for Android called "The Letters App." It is designed to teach children the Arabic alphabet. But the phone application directs jihadi messages to children by connecting letters to corresponding jihadi words. For example, the word for the letter "mim" is "midfa," i.e., cannon. "Ba" is "bundaqiya," i.e., gun. "Dal" is "dababa," i.e., tank. "Sad" is "saroukh," i.e., bomb. Google has removed the phone application. However, it can still be linked through numerous websites. It should serve as a warning for its pretext of teaching children.

These efforts by Daesh are turning some adolescents into ticking time bombs. Evidence gathered





**Runners take part in the Baghdad International Marathon, organized by the Youth Ministry, in January 2016.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

during the battle of Salah Adin province in 2015 demonstrates Daesh's attempts to disrupt the work of the Iraqi Armed Forces and undermine the efforts of the international coalition by pushing adolescent suicide bombers into Shia areas and mosques, such as in the Al-Baiyaa neighborhood in Baghdad. In one instance, a young Syrian man surrendered to Iraqi security forces after being overcome with feelings of guilt. Adolescents were among the suicide car bombers in Anbar province. These attacks targeted anti-terror operations of the Iraqi military forces. This situation demonstrates the necessity of intelligence forces to monitor individuals even after Mosul and Raqqa are liberated. Trained individuals will be ready when called upon by the leadership of Daesh to follow orders and carry out suicide missions and reprisals not only in Iraq, Syria and Libya, but also in Europe, the United States and other countries.

## **Women as terrorists**

As for the widows of Daesh's fighters, they will constitute a major development in the operations of the terrorist

organization. The Black Widows phenomenon has become familiar. It occurs when a young woman wearing black clothes carries out a terrorist operation individually and without belonging to any specific organization. This type of terrorist attack has happened in Russia. And in December 2014, the United Arab Emirates witnessed an attack that mimicked this pattern.

A young Emirati girl, known as the "Reem Island Ghost," sought to assassinate foreign workers with grenades. The Reem Island Ghost was transformed into a terrorist after joining an electronic jihadi forum that promoted the targeting of state institutions in the Emirates. According to the published confessions of the Reem Island Ghost in the Emirati newspaper *Al-Itihad*, the jihadi site broadcast a video explaining how to make bombs. Additionally, intelligence indicates that Daesh fighters killed in battle are now being succeeded by their widows and adolescent children in Iraq, Syria and Libya. In most cases, they are local citizens.

Most analyses of Daesh have determined that widows may soon become an important tool in suicide and combat



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**Successful outreach to the local population can provide information that can be used to prevent Daesh's deadly use of adolescents and widows in the coming stage of operations.**

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**Iraqi military members help people displaced by fighting near Fallujah in June 2016.**

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



operations. Daesh fighters may distance themselves from the primary arena of the conflict, and it may be easy to build a large network of women filled with hatred and resentment for local communities and governments. The Black Widows theory suggests that women may be used in combat operations across cluster cells or may manage plans for reprisal terrorist attacks. Any grievances and resentments of civilian life will be very beneficial to Daesh in exploiting widows and planning suicide attacks. This will make the battlefield more complex.

The lack of programs to combat terrorism beyond the cessation of fighting in Iraq and Syria will give Daesh the opportunity to recruit new generations of local terrorists adapted to their environments. These adolescents and widows will form the next phase of the organization and become one of the most basic tools for Daesh and other terrorist organizations. The ability of the Iraqi government and the international coalition to manage the provinces that have suffered under Daesh's rule will be tested.

## Addressing the problem

Successful outreach to the local population can provide information that can prevent Daesh's deadly use of adolescents and widows in the coming stage of operations. A fair justice system, the equitable distribution of services and improvements to the local economy will all help to integrate those who were deceived by Daesh and joined its ranks. However, retreating from these efforts in the Iraqi provinces and focusing only on security and military tools will facilitate Daesh's use of these two methods. This will threaten international security.

A program is needed to contain the emerging phenomenon of new generations being exploited by Daesh and other terrorist organizations. Therefore, the Iraqi government, counterterrorism efforts and the international coalition must build a national/international program to combat terrorism, extremism and violence and address the remnants of Daesh with the following methods:

1. Gather in-depth information about adolescents and widows in the liberated areas and construct a strategic database overseen by anti-terrorism professionals. These efforts must coordinate security with competent authorities to contain these threats.
2. Construct a social center in each province to bring about intellectual and social change. Build operational, intellectual, judicial, developmental and social lessons to re-instill humanitarian, national and social values in the hearts and minds of those affected by extremist and takfiri ideas.
3. Build a program of evaluation and follow-up that determines the scope of the courses and study seminars and monitors their effectiveness. Validate these studies through follow-up dialogue and technical reports from each panel discussion and seminar.
4. Involve the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Government Banks, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Health and provincial councils in creating a developmental and economic program that builds individual skills. After participants graduate from these seminars, they should pursue professional vocations that generate income for the local community and promote sustainable and financially successful projects.
5. Urge civil society and community organizations to participate in rehabilitation programs for orphans and widows.
6. Urge security organizations to provide, at least temporarily, official government papers to facilitate rehabilitation among this population. The goal is to preserve human dignity until the end of the program period and the integration process. Following this, revoke these temporary papers and give participants who are not Iraqi nationals their documents in accordance with Iraqi laws and regulations. Deport anyone who is not Iraqi to his/her country of origin following negotiations with official government agencies and bodies holding proper authority.
7. Encourage vulnerable segments of society to find productive employment and monitor their relationship with society and compliance with local and federal authorities.
8. Measure the effects of the integration process on orphans and widows left behind by Daesh, as well as their interaction within their local communities.
9. Reward people who advance the integration process and make them conscious of their Iraqi nationality in the transition process toward good citizenship.
10. Encourage communities to facilitate the social integration of these people once they finish rehabilitation and training. ♦



**An Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service medic treats a child's wound from a terrorist car bomb attack in Mosul.** CTS CAMERA

# Countering Terrorist Narratives



## Kazakhstan Employs a Multidisciplinary Approach

Dr. Irina Chernykh

Chief research fellow, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies

**K**azakhstan currently has two main strategies for dealing with extremist violence and terrorism: Use of law enforcement to eliminate the enemy physically and preventive measures to make it impossible for terrorist structures to function properly — primarily population outreach measures.

The Kazakh government's guiding principle is that violence alone, undertaken without additional measures, cannot produce results in the fight against terrorism, and it may lead to even more dangerous outcomes, since it does not eliminate the conditions that produce acts of terrorism. This principle serves as the stepping stone for the country's transition from the concept of countering terrorism to the more encompassing concept of countering radicalization.

### RADICALIZATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

Today, the term “radicalization” is widely used. The concept draws its popularity from its descriptive nature in terms of causes of terrorism and the factors that drive acts of terrorism. Starting in 2004, and especially in 2005, after the Madrid and London attacks respectively, the term radicalization took center stage in the analysis of terrorism and counterterrorism policies.

In Kazakhstan, the term radicalization came into relatively systematic use in 2011, when the country was shaken by a series of violent acts, most of which were interpreted as terrorism by the public and experts. For example, on July 4, 2011, the television channel Stan.tv showed a video titled *Kazakhstan: The Threat of Islamic Radicalization* and dedicated to the attack on police forces in Aktobe. On November 22, 2012, First Deputy Prosecutor General Iogan Merkel highlighted religious radicalization in Kazakhstan during the International Conference on Counter-Terrorism. By the

mid-2010s, the term radicalization had secured its place in the political, academic and journalistic vocabulary.

### COUNTERTERRORISM NARRATIVES

Counterterrorism narratives in Kazakhstan are constructed on the foundation of pertinent legislation that regulates the country's counterterrorist activities. The laws in this sphere are quite exhaustive and require only minor tweaks. There is also the State Programme on Combating Religious Extremism and Terrorism for 2013-2017, which establishes a set of measures designed to reduce conditions that promote religious extremism and terrorism, and provides a platform for ongoing improvements in the functioning of state agencies.

Institutions that shape counterterrorism narratives in Kazakhstan can be divided into two groups:

1. **Secular** (Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, Agency for Religious Affairs, Anti-Terror Center under the National Security Committee, nongovernmental organizations, Centers for the Study of Religion, secondary and higher education institutions, mass media).
2. **Religious** (Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan, local imams).

### ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE OF KAZAKHSTAN (APK)

As an advisory body under the president, the APK is among the key structures that shape and promote ideas of spiritual unity; foster and strengthen ties of friendship between nations, ethnicities and confessions; and uphold social stability. In fact, counterterrorism narratives are formed as part of the Concept of Strengthening and Developing Kazakhstani Identity and Unity (2015), which can be boiled down to the following examples:



- Kazakh identity and unity are built on the foundation of our shared values based on cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity.
- Kazakh identity and unity is a continuous intergenerational process based on the fact that each citizen, regardless of ethnicity, has linked his or her destiny and future with Kazakhstan. Our society is united by a shared past, a shared present and a shared responsibility for the future. We share one nation and one Motherland: Independent Kazakhstan.

### COMMITTEE FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

The Committee for Religious Affairs under the Ministry of Culture and Sport designs and implements state policies devised to protect freedom of religion and work with religious organizations, develops proposals for improving relevant legislation, conducts appropriate educational outreach measures, analyzes the religious situation in the country and conducts religious evaluations.

Educational outreach groups focused on protecting freedom of religion and preventing radicalization provide channels for disseminating counterterrorism narratives, along with the cultural and educational online resource e-islam.kz and the telephone hotline for issues related to religion. Religious experts also monitor internet resources for extremist content and block offending websites. The committee reports that more than 7,000 websites were analyzed in 2015, and 177 extremist resources were discovered and referred to court.

Examples of counterterrorism narratives produced by the Committee for Religious Affairs can be found in statements

from its Chairman Galym Shoikin:

- “From the very beginning, our country found the only correct answer: secularism, which allows members of different ethnicities and confessions to live in peace and accord.”
- “All religious associations have equal rights and equal responsibilities, and regardless of their faith, are equally accountable for unlawful actions as prescribed by law.”

### SPIRITUAL ADMINISTRATION OF MUSLIMS OF KAZAKHSTAN (SAMK)

Traditional Islam is represented by SAMK. With its roots in the Soviet period, it serves as a national Islamic religious association with branches in every region of the country. The following measures provide channels for disseminating counterterrorism narratives:

- Development of the country’s own system of theological education (with 10 madrassas and one university).
- An attestation and further professional training system for the country’s imams, which includes clarification of the country’s religion legislation and specific steps to prevent dissemination of extremist ideologies (1,400 imams went through this training in 2015).
- National and regional educational outreach groups that work with the country’s religious population.
- Publication of religious educational materials (41 titles in 2015) and websites ([www.muftyat.kz](http://www.muftyat.kz), [www.muslim.kz](http://www.muslim.kz)).

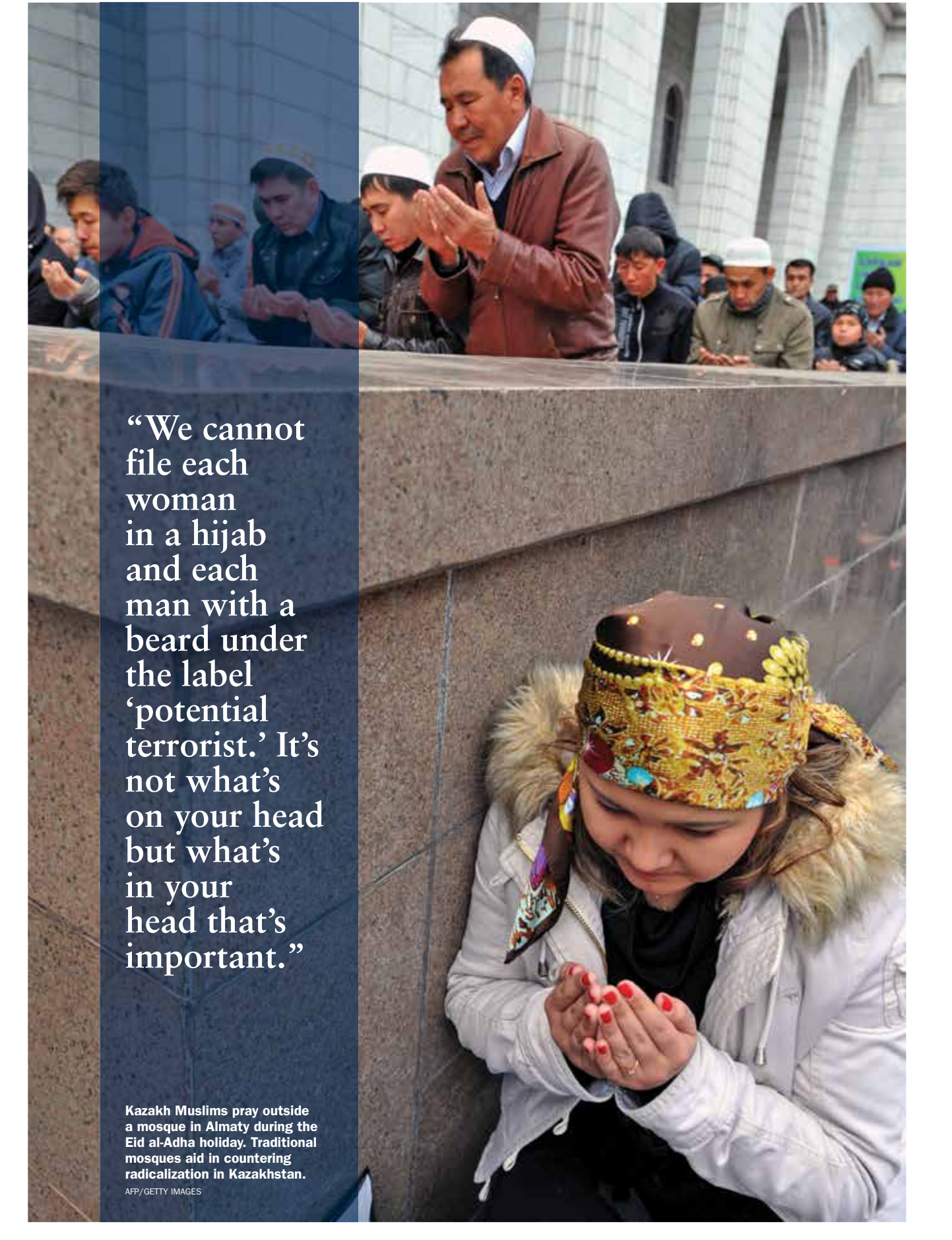
Examples of counterterrorism narratives can be found in the statements of the Supreme Mufti of Kazakhstan Erzhan Kazy Malgazyuly:



Special forces are part of Kazakhstan's integrated plan to counter terrorism when radicalization occurs.

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“We cannot  
file each  
woman  
in a hijab  
and each  
man with a  
beard under  
the label  
‘potential  
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not what’s  
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in your  
head that’s  
important.”

Kazakh Muslims pray outside  
a mosque in Almaty during the  
Eid al-Adha holiday. Traditional  
mosques aid in countering  
radicalization in Kazakhstan.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



- “We cannot say religion is separate from the state, because the state is made up of society, and society is inconceivable without religion. ... Religion is separate from politics. That’s what we must clarify. Religion must not be involved in politics. It must not be used as a means to achieve political goals.”
- “Our ancestors ... had only one goal: to preserve the nation.”

## NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Several NGOs focused on preventing and counteracting violent extremism and terrorism operate in Kazakhstan. These organizations work with various focus groups:

- Convicts serving prison terms for participation in religious extremism and terrorism (Akniyet).
- Religious Muslims (at the jamaat, mosque and family level; Shapagat, Ansar, Nurly, Bilim).
- Youth (Citizens’ Alliance, Association of Centres for the Study of Religion).
- Victims of violence, women (Center for Victims of Destructive Religious Movements).

Examples of counterterrorism narratives can be found in the statements of the Director of the Association of Centres for Victims of Destructive Religious Movements, Yulia Denisenko:

“We cannot file each woman in a hijab and each man with a beard under the label ‘potential terrorist.’ It’s not what’s on your head but what’s in your head that’s important.”

## SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

These are the central institutions in the effort to prevent radicalization and violent extremism, as well as to promote counterterrorism narratives. To use this tool effectively, the country is undergoing a shift in the concept of religious education, designed to improve the population’s religious literacy. For example, Introduction to Religious Studies, a required secondary school class, has been transformed into Introduction to Secularism and Religious Studies.

Seminars for secondary and higher education students designed to prevent radicalization are held regularly, along with religious education outreach, formation of an academic knowledge base, inoculation against destructive ideologies presented as religion and critical thinking skills. Today, the most pressing challenge in this sphere in Kazakhstan is a shortage of qualified experts in the field of religion. To address this problem, the government has allocated funds for the training of religious studies experts (in 2014-2015, 82 grants were offered for professional education in religious studies, 150 grants for Islamic studies and 15 for theology).

## MASS MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

The professional journalism community has developed a code of ethics for media reporting of acts of terrorism and extremism. The general principles outlined in the code are: to support victims of terrorism and the state and law enforcement in fighting terrorism, and to unequivocally denounce the actions of terrorists.



Policemen arrest a suspect from an armed attack on a police station in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in July 2016. The attack by extremists killed at least three policemen and one civilian. EPA

The Bloggers’ Alliance of Kazakhstan tracks cases of dissemination of extremist and terrorist ideologies on social networks, and the results are referred to court to block these destructive internet resources. In addition, a three-part documentary about the situation in Syria was produced based on interviews with former terrorists from Kazakhstan who fought in the Syrian conflict zone and were convicted for their unlawful actions. The documentary was broadcast several times on TV in Kazakhstan, and judging by feedback from viewers and experts, had a serious emotional impact on the country’s population.

## CONCLUSION

Counterterrorism narratives produced in Kazakhstan are primarily designed to change the behavior of radicalized individuals, rather than their mentality. These narratives are more cost-effective and risk alienating radicalized individuals and encouraging them only to imitate “normal” behavior.

On the other hand, no measures can solve the problem of radicalization once and for all. Radicalization, as well as “deradicalization,” is a process unique to each individual, with different factors influencing each specific case.

Therefore, proactive measures designed to change the attitudes and convictions of people in particularly vulnerable and high-risk groups, and consequently prevent radicalization, are more effective in the long run. Some of the areas particularly crucial for a proactive approach to preventing radicalization are:

- Regular analysis of the current situation and continuous monitoring of the level of radicalization in the country, as well as work with particularly vulnerable, high-risk groups.
- Measures designed to assimilate particularly vulnerable high-risk groups into the larger society.
- More active involvement of women’s organizations in the campaign to prevent radicalization and promote deradicalization. ♦




Jordanian security forces help Syrian children at the Hadalat border crossing.  
AFP/GETTY IMAGES





# *Aiding* SYRIA

MILITARIES AND CIVILIANS COMBINE EFFORTS  
TO HELP MILLIONS DISPLACED BY WAR UNIPATH STAFF



The ongoing Syrian refugee crisis has evolved into one of the largest and most complex aid operations ever undertaken by Middle East countries and humanitarian organizations.

An estimated 4.5 million Syrians have fled across the border, and another 6.5 million Syrians are displaced from their homes but trapped in the war-torn country. Half of all displaced Syrians are children.

The enormity of the challenges is being felt in the bordering countries of Lebanon and Jordan, where millions have resettled, and in other Middle East countries that want to help people in need of food, health care and other basic needs.

Five countries — Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey — have accepted the vast majority of refugees. Others, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), are providing millions of dollars in aid and support for the refugees. European countries and the United States have also contributed money for humanitarian programs.

Across the region, militaries and civilian organizations have joined forces to maximize their efforts.

## LEBANON

More than 1 million Syrian refugees have settled in Lebanon, equal to about a quarter of the country's entire population. While some refugees live in camps near the Syrian border, many others have integrated into existing communities.



**A Syrian refugee uses humanitarian aid vouchers to shop for Ramadan at the al-Zaatari camp in Jordan.**

REUTERS

The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and civil agencies work together to meet the tremendous needs of such a large displaced population.

Recognizing a need to coordinate the relief work, the LAF in 2012 established a Civil-Military Cooperation Section to oversee the numerous aid efforts. The section was elevated in 2015 to a directorate that helped establish medical clinics, provided school supplies to children, upgraded various social development centers and refurbished schools and government buildings and infrastructure.

LAF Sgt. Ali Sayf-al-Din said the military's aid efforts are significant beyond the help provided to the refugees.

"It is very important for us to show that the role of the Army is not limited to protecting the borders and combating terrorism," Sayf-al-Din said. "It goes beyond that to include the social side."

By no means are the humanitarian efforts limited to the military. The country's Education Ministry opened its public schools to refugees, and though every child cannot be reached, an estimated 158,000 from kindergarten to ninth grade have been enrolled in the public education system in Lebanon.

An official Lebanese emergency aid network works with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in coordinating help from international organizations and others.

Lebanese society is also contributing, with nearly 30 charitable Lebanese nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operating in north Lebanon to help refugees, according to the Migration Policy Centre, based in Italy.

The UNHCR singles out the public for praise. "The Lebanese people ... were the true first responders to the crisis, showing remarkable solidarity by providing welcome, shelter, services and support, even though in many cases their own needs were already high," the UNHCR report said.

## JORDAN

Like Lebanon, Jordan's proximity to Syria has thrust the country into the midst of the refugee crisis. An estimated 635,000 Syrians have sought refuge in Jordan, increasing the country's population by close to 10 percent.

The Jordan Armed Forces responded with hospitality, easing the concerns of refugees young and old. The Soldiers provided water and food, and military doctors and nurses provided care and medicine. The efforts brought a sense of peace to war-torn refugees desperate for help.

"This Arabic Army is an Army for building and establishing civilization as well as an Army for sacrifice and

heroism," a Jordan Armed Forces statement said. "It is a well-informed Army that can provide health care and humanitarian help when needed. It is an Army that aids in development."

With so many Syrians having connections to neighboring Jordan, the first refugee waves were absorbed into society. But as the numbers swelled, Jordan opened refugee camps with the help of the U.N. and NGOs.

The first to open, Qatari, near the Syrian border, is home to more than 80,000 refugees. It instantly became one of the country's largest communities. Others were opened to house the overflow, including one financed by the UAE and run by its Red Crescent Society.

Majid Sultan bin Suleiman, the society's relief director at the camp, said the Emirati government covered all expenses, including food, clothing,

basic goods and medical aid. A medical team offered pediatric, dental, pharmaceutical and internal medical care, and included Jordanian and Syrian health workers.

Humanitarian agencies were also present. One of them, the U.S.-based Mercy Corps, delivered food and clean water, improved shelters and provided families with clothing, mattresses and other household essentials.

"We are helping children cope with trauma and leading



**Syrian refugees in Lebanon take part in a street performance in the town of Saadnayel in Bekaa Valley in June 2016.** THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



“ IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR US TO SHOW THAT THE ROLE OF THE ARMY IS NOT LIMITED TO PROTECTING THE BORDERS AND COMBATING TERRORISM. IT GOES BEYOND THAT TO INCLUDE THE SOCIAL SIDE. ”

~ *Lebanese Armed Forces* SGT. ALI SAYF-AL-DIN



Jordanian soldiers help women and children enter Jordan from Syria in May 2016. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



**Syrian refugees receive aid packages at a health center at al-Zaatari refugee camp in the Jordanian city of Mafraq.** REUTERS

constructive activities to nurture their healthy development,” a Mercy Corps statement said. “And we are focused on helping host communities and refugees work together to mitigate tensions and find solutions to limited resources.”

Ahmed al-Hassan, 30, a butcher who fled Syria with his wife and two young sons, told The Associated Press it took four days to reach Jordan after they fled bloodshed in their Homs neighborhood. They skirted Syria’s border near Iraq and hitched rides whenever they could to reach Jordan. “There is nothing left there,” he said after reaching the UAE-run refugee camp.

## THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

In addition to funding a refugee camp in Jordan, the UAE has offered residency permits to more than 100,000 Syrians and provided millions in aid. More

than 242,000 Syrian nationals live in the UAE, according to a UAE government report.

Since 2012, the country has provided \$530 million in humanitarian aid and development assistance directly and through the Syria Recovery Trust Fund established by the UAE, U.S. and Germany.

In 2015, the UAE pledged an additional \$100 million in support of Syrian refugees.

The UAE has also contributed \$72 million over two years to various refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey and has provided \$38 million for UNHCR programs since the crisis erupted in 2011.

Additionally, the country has worked to achieve peace in Syria through its support for the Global Coalition against Daesh and its role as a co-leader for the Coalition Working Groups on Stabilization and Strategic Communications. The UAE military also is part of the coalition effort to drive Daesh from Syria.

## SAUDI ARABIA

According to Saudi Arabia’s news agency, the country has given refuge to Syrians and is contributing militarily to the coalition campaign against Daesh.

The kingdom “was keen to not deal with them



as refugees or to put them in refugee camps, to preserve their dignity and safety, and gave them complete freedom of movement,” a Saudi government source told the Saudi Press Agency. It “gave whoever chose to stay in the kingdom ... all the rights that are included like free health care and engaging in the workforce and education.”

Saudi Arabia has also provided \$700 million in humanitarian aid to Syrians and established clinics in refugee camps, the statement said. The official source said more than 100,000 Syrian students were receiving free education in the kingdom.

The country has also provided humanitarian aid to countries hosting Syrian refugees and through international relief organizations. The National Campaign to Support Brothers in Syria is providing relief to thousands of displaced Syrians in that country and in Jordan and Lebanon.

As part of those efforts, food baskets were delivered to more than 1,000 Syrian families in Irbid, Jordan, in May 2016. The next month, three relief trucks with 12,000 meals were delivered to refugees at the Syrian border with Turkey. Also that month, as part of a Ramadan program, 1,250 food parcels were delivered to the towns of Baalbek and Al-Ayrouniyah in Lebanon.

Dr. Badr bin Abdulrahman Al-Samhan, regional director of the Saudi National Campaign, said the relief assistance includes medical, nutritional, educational and social programs aimed at helping displaced Syrians within Syria and in neighboring countries.

## QATAR

Also helping is Qatar, which donated \$5 million to Turkey’s Humanitarian Pooled Fund in May 2016 to aid Syrian refugees, part of the \$110 million Qatar has contributed to aid efforts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and other countries in 2016. Qatar pledged \$92 million in aid in 2015.

Qatar Development Fund General Director Khalifa bin Jassim said the donation underscores Qatar’s ongoing support of refugees and demonstrates his country’s desire to end suffering across the Middle East.

## SYRIA

The assistance is also reaching displaced people inside Syria. The United Nations, Red Cross and Syrian Red Crescent made a significant breakthrough in June 2016 when trucks carrying medical and food aid entered two blockaded towns near Damascus, marking the first time humanitarian agencies were able to reach all besieged areas of Syria.

The 38-truck convoy carried aid for an estimated 20,000 people living in Zamalka and Irbin, Reuters reported. “Today is the first time we are able to move a joint convoy of the United Nations, the Red Cross and Syrian Red Crescent ... to these two towns since November 2012, nearly four years ago,” U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator Yacoub El Hillo said.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said the aid included food parcels and wheat flour, hygiene kits and medicine. Aid agencies have repeatedly called for regular access to areas under siege, saying a single delivery quickly runs out.



**A Syrian refugee uses a laptop at Mtein Public School near Mount Lebanon in May 2016.** REUTERS

## U.S.

In addition to its military assistance in the fight against terror in Syria, the United States has provided humanitarian assistance across the battle-weary country and to governments and organizations throughout the region.

According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the government agency primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid, the U.S. reaches an estimated 5 million Syrians every month. In addition, the U.S. is helping Syria’s neighbors build the infrastructure needed to cope with

an overwhelming number of refugees.

USAID, the Department of Defense, Department of State and NGOs work in unison. For instance, the partners are helping nearly 22,000 refugees living in the Azraq Refugee Camp in Jordan.

USAID and U.S. Central Command Civil Affairs Advisors, as part of the Civilian-Military Support Element, collaborated on the construction of the Azraq Remedial Education Center and the Azraq Borehole Facility that provides well water to the camp.

## CONCLUSION

The immense scope of the five-year-old crisis has put a strain on the countries affected and on the responding humanitarian agencies and militaries in those countries. The coordination of militaries and relief workers on the ground is critical to these efforts succeeding.

With each passing year, the refugees’ prospects of returning to their homes becomes more distant, and countries such as Lebanon and Jordan are considering the implications of absorbing large refugee populations for the longer term.

In the meantime, they will continue to rely on the generosity of contributing countries and on humanitarian agencies and militaries around the world that have answered the call. Without the coordinated efforts, millions of Syrian refugees would be denied even basic human needs. ♦



Participants from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and the U.S. take part in U.S. Central Command's 2016 Regional Cooperation (RC 16) multinational exercise.





# FORCES OF *Peace*

The multilateral Regional Cooperation military exercise focuses on rapid responses to protect civilians

UNIPATH STAFF | PHOTOS BY 1ST LT. DAVID J. SCHWAB/U.S. ARMY

A country racked by decades of civil war, government corruption and lawlessness is on the brink of descending further into chaos. Huge numbers of civilians flee to camps to escape the violence and famine afflicting the nation, but long-standing ethnic and tribal hostilities, kidnappings, illegal checkpoints and dwindling resources instigate a humanitarian crises of epic proportions. Desperate to protect civilians, the United Nations calls upon a multinational brigade to intervene.

This fictitious scenario served as the backdrop for U.S. Central Command's 2016 Regional Cooperation (RC 16) multinational command-post military exercise. Forces from Central and South Asia and the United States were enlisted to address this complex crisis and assist in stabilizing and pacifying the failing state.

The exercise, which occurred in September 2016 at Joint Base Cape Cod in the United States, brought together more than 200 participants, mostly from the militaries of Pakistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, the U.S. and Kazakhstan.

Building strong relationships and increasing the capabilities of international forces supporting stability operations were among the main focuses of RC 16.

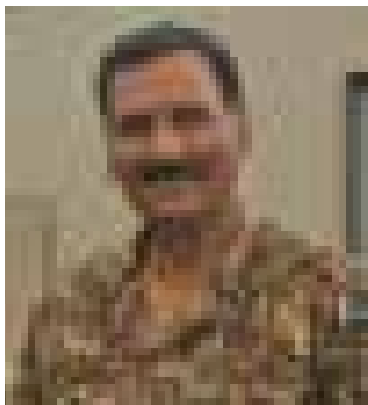
"It's very important to cooperate at the international and regional levels so that, together, we can meet and overcome the changing threats," Pakistani Brig. Gen. Shahid Imtiaz said.

With a strong history of participation in international peacekeeping operations, Pakistan was the lead nation for RC 16. Within the exercise scenario, Brig. Gen. Shahid was charged with leading a U.N. Force Intervention Brigade whose mission was to help usher the population toward a stable society that adheres to the rule of law and respects human rights.

The brigadier general called the exercise an "excellent opportunity" for participating militaries from the U.S. and South and Central Asia to exhibit cooperation and build partnerships.

RC 16 began with four days of staff integration training for the forces, followed by a one-day seminar that focused on best practices, hosted by the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. The seminar was good preparation for the realistic scenarios that engaged forces during the main part of the exercise, Brig. Gen. Shahid said.

Over the course of the first few days, the brigade staff was challenged with responding to attacks on camps of internally displaced people (IDP), border incursions, medical



**“It’s very important to cooperate at the international and regional levels so that, together, we can meet and overcome the changing threats.”**

— Pakistani Brig. Gen. Shahid Imtiaz

emergencies, human trafficking and illegal checkpoints that prevented much-needed aid from getting to camps. It was helpful that the vast majority of Pakistan’s delegation has served on U.N. peacekeeping missions. Brig. Gen. Shahid praised the exercise. “It’s very realistic — very well done,” he said.

Challenging the multinational group with realistic scenarios so they could improve rapid response and global military coordination was an important objective. Another was to build relationships so countries can more effectively address common threats.

“I think we will all come to understand that modern threats know no boundaries and that it takes a multifaceted collective approach to mitigate threats and achieve common goals,” said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Ralph Groover III, Director of Exercises and Training at U.S. Central Command. “As the largest U.S. mil-to-mil exercise in the Central Asian region, Regional Cooperation 16 gives us an unparalleled opportunity to strengthen relationships with our partners so that we can overcome these complex security challenges.”

The exercise has been held annually since 2001 with participation from countries in Central and South Asia. Its location rotates; the 2015 exercise was held in Tajikistan. In addition to U.S. Central Command and the participants of the partner nations this year’s exercise included the U.S. Department of Defense Joint Staff, the Massachusetts National Guard, the U.S. Army’s 352nd Civil Affairs Command, linguists from the U.S. Army’s 300th Military Intelligence Brigade and the U.S. Army War College’s Peacekeeping and Stability Institute.

“This year’s exercise is in a field environment to better simulate a real U.N. mission,” said Regional Cooperation lead planner Maj. Robert McCracken. Forces worked in tents and had to contend with protecting computers and communications system from rain and harsh weather without interruptions to operations.

Kazakhstani Lt. Col. Atlant Toleukhanov said the exercise will help





improve his country's ability to support peacekeeping operations. And he said it was a great opportunity to learn and exchange experiences with others.

"When an exercise of this scale is held with multiple nations participating, you can more easily see and analyze the strong points and the weak points. This will help you improve and work toward better interoperability," Toleukhanov said.

One of the Kyrgyz officers working in the public affairs cell of the exercise — that part of the brigade tasked with communicating with the media and the public — echoed these sentiments. "I'm really grateful for the opportunity to work at this level. It's been very exciting for me to work with these officers and to see how they do things differently in the same area of work," the Kyrgyz officer said, adding that he believes that based upon the exercise objectives, they have achieved success, especially with building relations with partner nations.

Mongolian Lt. Col. Erdenesuren Lichil described the exercise as a valuable opportunity to train with regional partners in case they ever combine forces to keep the peace or respond to natural disasters.

"To achieve the aim of the mission, all international actors in U.N. missions need to cooperate, communicate and coordinate professionally. In a U.N. mission, the military component is comprised of U.N. member states that support U.N. staffs, NGOs, and international committees related to the mission," Lt. Col. Lichil said. "The Mongolian participants came here to learn more by improving staff planning, coordination and decision-making skills and to share knowledge and experience with participant nations during the exercises."

One of the female officers working in the Regional

Cooperation was Pakistani Maj. Mahreen Ali. Both within the exercise and back in Pakistan she served as a legal officer, and during the exercise she consulted with the multinational forces on rules of engagement and international law. "The best part is learning. I've learned a lot," she said. "Different countries have different ways of working. That's important to see and experience so that we are all prepared."

Throughout the exercise, the brigade, authorized to use lethal force if necessary, was asked to track down corrupt forces and criminals trying to profit from the chaos, protect civilians from ethnic violence, coordinate with nongovernmental organizations providing aid, and negotiate with rebel leaders. Participants also faced the daunting task of easing the suffering of a starving population infected with cholera and dysentery in their IDP camps. "All of these events are based on real world events," said Joint Staff exercise scenario manager Linda Exterkate. The goal for the brigade was to work together to facilitate conditions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to strengthen the fragile nation.

Brig. Gen. Shahid expressed pride in the brigade's performance and was pleased with the valuable experience gained by troops. Central Asian countries will have a large role to play in securing and stabilizing the region, he said, so it's good that they participate in such exercises to increase familiarity with the practices of partner nations.

"The scope of this exercise in this forum adds a new dimension," he said. "Pakistan and Central Asia are virtually neighbors, thus the safety and security of Central Asia is critically important to Pakistan. A lot of things are happening in our region, and we hope that Pakistan can be a conduit for regional peace and prosperity." ♦



**Left:** Military forces from Central and South Asia focused on providing support to U.N. peacekeeping operations during the command-post exercise held in the United States.

**Right:** Officers provide updates on operations to Pakistani Brig. Gen. Shahid Imtiaz during the Regional Cooperation 2016.

# PROMOTING TOLERANCE

UNIPATH STAFF

A SAUDI-  
SPONSORED  
ORGANIZATION  
PROMOTES  
RELIGIOUS  
DIALOGUE TO  
BUILD REGIONAL  
STABILITY

**D**aesh's depredations in Iraq and Syria have provoked a military response from a coalition of partners in the region and beyond. Less known, but ultimately just as important, is the ideological battle pitting the forces of extremism against the forces of tolerance.

The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), formed in November 2012 with the financial and political support of Saudi Arabia, is playing an increasingly important role in the ideological fight against Daesh and its collaborators.

KAICIID has spent its first couple of years hosting multinational conferences and educational programs at its headquarters in Vienna, but its experts are now pairing with governments and nongovernmental organizations to hold events on the ground in conflict zones, including Iraq, Nigeria and the Central African Republic. When several cities, such as Baghdad, Medina and Istanbul, were hit by terrorist attacks in 2016, the organization formally issued condolences in the names of the variety of religious leaders on its board.



"Wherever we go, the principle remains the same. We build a space where different religious groups can come together, like an island or oasis amid the fire," said Prof. Mohammed Abu Nimr, a senior advisor at KAICIID who specializes in conflict resolution and peace building.

In addition to advocating religious tolerance, the center has placed an emphasis on promoting citizenship as a focus of loyalty so that narrow religious prejudice doesn't rule the day. That's a particular concern in the Middle East, where violent extremists pervert religious messages in an attempt to undermine governance and breed instability.

"All of our relations depend upon trust. Trust results from inclusive dialogue, bringing together religious leaders, governments, teachers and civil society toward strengthening common citizenship for Muslims and Christians in the Arab world based on equality and respect for human rights," KAICIID Secretary-General Faisal Bin Muaammar of Saudi Arabia said.





KAICIID

**The Saudi-backed KAICIID promoted peace in the Central African Republic during a February 2016 forum that brought together Muslim leaders in the country.**

**Religious educators and scholars attend the KAICIID Fellows Programme, a yearlong program that provides training in conflict resolution and social cohesion. Students come from places such as Iraq, Egypt, Pakistan and Nigeria.**



KAICIID

In April 2016, KAICIID for the first time convened its Advisory Forum, a body consisting of representatives of the world's major religions. The attendees denounced extremist movements that misinterpret religion for nefarious ends and pressed for increased news coverage of positive developments in religious tolerance. As the organization noted at the conclusion of the conference:

"In a time of increasing conflict and violence in the name of religion, practitioners will need to engage the media and relate the stories of the hundreds of acts of interreligious kindness that occur for every act of violence in the name of religion. In times of extremist violence, it is clear that dialogue must be pursued vigorously, proactively and continuously to engage the young and actively prevent their recruitment to violent actions."

It's a theme KAICIID has repeated since its founding. In late 2014, Abu Nimr invited a coalition of mostly Arab religious leaders to issue a joint declaration against religious-inspired terrorist violence. The 24 leaders in attendance included seven muftis from places such as Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon and patriarchs and bishops from various Christian sects across the Middle East.

"You rarely get these groups to agree on a joint agenda," the professor said. "They were all united against violence in the name of religion."

Abu Nimr understands the process will take time. Certain

parts of the Middle East, South Asia and Africa suffer from absent or weak governing institutions that are unable to regulate society and provide the rule of law, he said. Even in Europe, building stable, tolerant societies took centuries. But KAICIID hopes to accelerate change by strengthening religious institutions to serve as stabilizing forces.

"For us to accomplish anything in conflict zones, we have to constructively engage religious leaders and institutions to immunize the public from being manipulated by religious radicals and political radicals to justify violence," he said.

KAICIID also recognizes the importance militaries can play in bringing stability to the Middle East, Afghanistan and South Asia.

"The military is very important as a stabilizing force when it wants to play that role. Without the military, Egypt would descend into chaos," Abu Nimr said. "But the constructive role the military plays should be transitional, transitioning to a system that is more civilian based."

KAICIID has provided another helpful service by designing an online "peace map" that notes 400 organizations around the world devoted to interreligious dialogue. Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Central Asia and the Arabian Gulf states all provided entries.

"There is disease right now called manipulation of religious identity," the professor said. "And many people are using it to build their political power." ♦





# COMBATING TERRORISM *in the* KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

*The country has focused on improving religious education  
as a way to improve security*

BY SALTANAT BERDIKEEVA

The June 28, 2016, attack at Istanbul Ataturk Airport cast a shadow of terrorism not only on Turkey, but also on Central Asian countries such as the Kyrgyz Republic.

By shutting down terror cells and disrupting terrorist incursions, the Kyrgyz Republic has been largely spared from attacks. However, the Kyrgyz government and local media have expressed concerns about the growing threat to the country of religious extremism and terrorism. Such concerns are amplified by the reach of Daesh and its indiscriminate attacks on targets across the world.

This article assesses some of the Kyrgyz Republic's latest anti-terror measures and its preparedness to combat extremism and terrorism.



*The Kyrgyz Republic understands that proper religious education is key to countering extremism and terrorism.*

**Weekly prayers in Bishkek draw young and old. The Kyrgyz government is promoting proper religious education to prevent Daesh from deceiving vulnerable citizens.**

## EXISTING THREATS

On July 16, 2015, Kyrgyz security forces engaged in a bloody battle with terrorists in the country's capital for the first time. Security forces killed six terrorists and captured a seventh. They were reportedly part of Daesh and planned two attacks in the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek.

The incident aroused anxiety in the country. In recent years, the Kyrgyz Republic reportedly foiled dozens of attacks planned by international terrorist groups. Having blacklisted a multitude of groups for presenting a threat to the country's security, Kyrgyz authorities now worry about the reach of Daesh into Central Asia.

Toward the end of 2015, the Kyrgyz Republic outlawed 19 extremist and terrorist groups, including al-Qaida, Movement of the Taliban, Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan, Islamic State, and Jabhat al-Nusrah. According to the Kyrgyz Interior Ministry, police identified 4,000 people as adherents of extremist views. Kyrgyz authorities stressed that the spread of religious extremist ideas is particularly troublesome in the southern provinces of Osh and Jalal-Abad, though such extremism is also present in the northern part of the republic.

## COMBATING EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

The Kyrgyz Republic is a member of a

number of regional and international security organizations, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Collective Security Treaty Organization, and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. All of these promote military cooperation, counterterrorism, and information and intelligence sharing among member countries. The Kyrgyz Republic has been actively conducting and participating in counterterrorist training and military exercises within the anti-terrorist frameworks of these organizations. The country also benefits from U.S. training programs for its customs and border security and police.

Kyrgyz officials have also undertaken anti-terrorist measures at home, with a focus on young people as possible targets as well as perpetrators. Because young people are vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment by religious extremist groups, the Kyrgyz Interior Ministry has reached out to youth to help identify extremists and recruitment attempts on social media and report them to law enforcement.

At the same time, Kyrgyz authorities increasingly see educational facilities and dormitories as potential terrorist targets. A decree of the Ministry of Education from March 2016 requires that such facilities meet standards set by the Anti-Terrorist Center of the State Committee of National Security. The measures





THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

include proper evacuation plans; forbidding access by unauthorized people to educational buildings; thorough inspections of electrical and gas equipment on school property; and training for staff and students on how to respond to a terrorist attack.

The Kyrgyz Republic understands that proper religious education is key to countering extremism and terrorism. In the context of the newfound freedom of religion and the spiritual quest of many Kyrgyzstanis after the collapse of the Soviet Union, both the Kyrgyz public and authorities see a link between the search for religious identity, poor religious education and the vulnerability of those who fall prey to extremist propaganda. Kyrgyz authorities believe that the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan or the Muftiate, an official coordinating body for Islamic institutions and education in the country, could play a more active role in guiding the country's Islamic affairs. Indeed, coordination of counterradicalization efforts between state authorities and the Muftiate has noticeably improved.

The Muftiate appears to have stepped up its role from being a mere rubber stamp like its Soviet predecessor to being a more dynamic and important actor in providing proper Islamic training. The organization reportedly

conducted 29 trainings in 2015 aimed at raising the qualifications of imams on countering radicalization and violent extremism, as well as 18 trainings to 920 students of madrasas. Governors, local officials and law enforcement authorities also participated in these trainings, resulting in discussions with the Muftiate on the necessity of outreach to youth about Islam and radicalization. In addition, 70 madrasas in the country introduced a unified curriculum at the behest of the Kyrgyz Republic's National Defense Council. With 2,662 mosques operating in the country, it is unlikely more mosques will be built, according to Mufti Maksatbek aji Toktomushev.

Faced with global terror threats, the Kyrgyz focus on the quality of religious education and the radicalization of its youth are of paramount importance. But the country's success in stopping the spread of extremism within its borders will depend on larger changes — improving the standard of living, cracking down on corruption, maintaining political stability and respecting human rights. The Kyrgyz Republic's ability to counter religious radicalization with ties to global terrorist networks hinges on a delicate balance between respecting democratic values and human rights, while clamping down on radical Islam. Overreaction is likely to worsen radicalization. ♦

**Friends and family honor victims of the Ataturk Airport bombing in Turkey in June 2016. One of the attackers was a Daesh member from the Kyrgyz Republic.**



# *Imams against* **INTOLERANCE**

Jordan  
honors the  
graduating  
class of the  
Prince Hassan  
College for  
Islamic  
Studies

UNIPATH STAFF

PHOTOS BY  
**MUKHALAD  
AL-KHAWLDA,**  
PRINCE HASSAN  
COLLEGE

**A**s a resolute step to defeat terrorists, the Prince Hassan College for Islamic Studies in Jordan stands tall against an extremist ideology that manipulates religion to deceive young Muslims.

This academic institution prepares proud men to serve as Jordan Armed Forces imams equipped with a true Islamic doctrine that rejects violence and promotes tolerance and peaceful coexistence. These military imams have the knowledge to expose the lies that terrorists spread to justify their crimes. It is essential to defeat terrorist ideology while defeating them militarily.

In May 2016, the college celebrated the graduation of the latest class of young military imams, part of the 6th Battalion, the Battalion of Imam Malik ibn Anas. The guests of honor at the ceremony were then-staff Lt. Gen. Mohammad Hamid Al-Qaralah, director of human resources for the Jordan Armed Forces; then-Maj. Gen. Yahya al-Batoush, Ph.D., the mufti of the Armed Forces; Brig. Gen. Mohammad Al-Daaja, Ph.D., dean of the college; and Brig. Gen. Majid Salim Al-Drawsha, Ph.D., director of Academic Studies at the college. Additional guests included the director of officer affairs, the director of moral guidance in the Jordan Armed Forces, and many officers and staff.

The graduates stood proudly in their uniforms — navy blue with red stripes and golden buttons — to salute the flag and honor the playing of the Jordanian national anthem. Their expressions revealed their innermost bliss and determination to carry out the noble cause of promoting a true Islamic spirit derived from the Quran and the Prophet's legacy.

By emphasizing His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein's Amman Message, the Jordanian government has empowered imams to promote tolerance and compassion among people and to expose the hypocrisy of a terrorist ideology that depends on selecting fragments from the Quran and using the traditions and sayings of the Prophet to justify ugly crimes and recruit young Muslims who lack a proper religious education.

These imams played a critical role in Afghanistan, where they met local citizens and built bridges with communities. They also were embedded in Bosnia during the peacekeeping mission to that country. The ability of the imams to reach into conflict zones has helped the anti-terror coalition win the hearts and minds of populations and expose the lies of terrorists.





Recently graduated imams of Prince Hassan College pose with college staffers and fellow officers in Amman, Jordan, in May 2016.

Recently graduated imams of the Prince Hassan College in Amman, Jordan, stand in front of the king's portrait in May 2016.



“I want you to continue your journey as you pledge loyalty to Jordan while conducting your duties. You must honor your command, be obedient and promote the true Islamic values you learned from the Hashemite school — the message of peace, love and mercy — so we can preserve Jordan as an oasis of stability and prosperity.”

— Brig. Gen. Majid Salim Al-Drawsha,  
Ph.D., director of Academic Studies at  
Jordan's Prince Hassan College

The college plays a significant role in preparing and training imams. Since 2011, this academic institution has graduated five battalions of expert and qualified clerics. These high-caliber imams provide advice and guidance to Soldiers and their families and serve the larger society by preaching Friday sermons. In addition to training new imams, the college offers continued education programs for existing imams in the armed forces, security sector, riot police and Ministry of Religious Affairs. So respected is the college that it also trains imams from other countries in the Middle East.

The ceremony concluded with a speech by Brig. Gen. Al-Drawsha offering congratulations and advice to the graduates:

“I offer my sincere blessings and congratulations and best wishes to you and your families for your great achievement. I want you to continue your journey as you pledge loyalty to Jordan while conducting your duties. You must honor your command, be obedient and promote the true Islamic values you learned from the Hashemite school — the message of peace, love and mercy — so we can preserve Jordan as an oasis of stability and prosperity. And let us sustain peace and serenity under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, God Bless Him.”

Prince Hassan College's ambition is to continue raising its academic levels so that it can offer master's degree and Ph.D. programs and continue bringing in qualified individuals to strengthen the academic and administrative staff. It hopes to offer its unique approach to the regional and Islamic nations and to train those students to reject extremist ideologies by using the moderate and balanced approach according to Amman Message. ♦

Source: <http://sdfmaxvcus3844.maximumasp.com/jafweb/ShowContentPrint.aspx?ContentId=165>





# ALWAYS PREPARED

Lebanese Army topples Daesh outposts on outskirts of Arsal

COL. ANIS K HOURY/LEBANESE ARMED FORCES

**T**he Lebanese Army is continuing to monitor terrorist sites and movements with the necessary planning, bravery and courage. Its continued efforts to track terrorist cells and strike them one after another have met with success.

In this context, Army units carried out two operations in late April 2016: First, they targeted a leading position of Daesh on the outskirts of Arsal. This led to the killing of the commander of this terrorist organization in the Arsal region, known by his nickname “Abu Fouz,” as well as his companion Ahmed Marwa. A Daesh security official for the Syrian sector named Muhammad Mustafa Mossali, also known by his nickname “Abu Milhem,” was detained.

The Army issued a statement about the operation in April 2016 and explained that the terrorists had been involved in clashes against the Army back in 2014, including the use of numerous car bombs and explosions targeting Army outposts and civilians in Arsal and its environs.

The proactive and successful operation in 2016 was carried out with the highest standards of professionalism.

**Lebanese Army Soldiers operate a howitzer near Arsal after military operations there killed a Daesh commander.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The goal of eliminating a group of high-ranking terrorists and detaining another one was achieved. The Army reported limited casualties, with only three Soldiers reporting minor injuries.

During the second operation, Army helicopters and rocket launchers targeted the headquarters of other armed groups in Wadi Uwaini in Arsal. This resulted in the destruction of the headquarters and a warehouse of ammunition and machinery, as well as a number of deaths and injuries.

Blessed are these brave men who continually demonstrate their righteousness, alertness, preparedness and loyalty. They are prepared to face the reprisals of terrorists who have betrayed their companions and compatriots. They are dressed in uniforms that represent honor, sacrifice and loyalty, and have sworn an oath to protect Lebanon from every enemy and evil.

They are doing this today, as they did yesterday, and will continue to do every day. ♦



# PROTECTING WATERWAYS

A BROAD NAVAL COALITION FROM THE ARABIAN GULF  
TO PAKISTAN HELPS SECURE THE SEAS

UNIPATH STAFF

When Pakistan took command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 in August 2016, it marked yet another instance when the nation has assumed a leadership role in naval missions to defend the waters in and around the Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman and Red Sea. In all, Pakistan has assumed the role more than 10 times.

“It is an honor for me to take over CTF 150. The Pakistan-led CTF 150 will continue to combat terrorists and illegal activities. This area is crucial for maritime trade, and it would be economically crippling if this area was

not protected,” Commodore Bilal Abdul Nasir of the Pakistan Navy said.

What makes this even more remarkable is that Pakistan, a dedicated participant in the Combined Maritime Forces mission based out of Manama, Bahrain, sits on the periphery of the Middle East, where most of the operations are focused.

A few months earlier, in April 2016, Pakistan had completed another stint commanding a related task force called CTF 151, established in 2009 to counter piracy near Yemen. And even in the Arabian Gulf, where CTF

152 holds sway, Pakistan supplied ships and Sailors to a major maritime exercise in the spring of 2016: the International Mine Countermeasures Exercise (IMCMEX).

“The defense forces of Pakistan are contributing actively in the Global War on Terror. In the maritime domain, the Pakistan Navy is contributing significantly toward counterterrorism efforts of the U.S.-led Coalition Force,” Pakistan’s Ministry of Defense noted in 2016.

The regional naval coalition — which has included participation from the six Gulf Cooperation Council





countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — has racked up many successes since 2001.

It has protected the passage of thousands of cargo ships and oil tankers through vital sea lanes such as the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb, seized illegal drugs and other contraband from smugglers and blocked arms shipments destined for terrorists and Houthi rebels in Yemen.

In April 2016, Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait joined multinational forces participating in IMCMEX, focused largely on detecting, clearing and disarming undersea mines. Drills stretched from the Red Sea to the northern rim of the Arabian Gulf. A Regional Marine Symposium in Manama drawing on many of the same countries occurred the same month.

Falcon Warrior, a Gulf-based exercise that occurred in July 2016, drew participants from the United Arab Emirates Navy, the Royal Saudi Naval Forces and Coast Guard, the United States and the United Kingdom. Its main focus was visit, board, search and seizure training.

To instill a united sense of purpose, combined task force commanders routinely visit nations adjacent to their areas of responsibility. In June 2016, Rear Adm. Ken Cheong of Singapore, then-commander of CTF 151, called on Abdullah bin Khamis bin Abdullah al-Raisi, commander of the Royal Navy of Oman, to discuss their mutual interest in protecting trading and fishing vessels against pirates.

CTF 152's commander, Col. Nayef Alasker of Kuwait, visited the UAE in June 2016 to meet Director of Naval Operations Gen. Abdula Al-Shahi and Commander Salem Al-Kendi of the UAE Coast Guard.

A focus of concern was the nearly 1,000 oil and energy installations in the Gulf. But less-well-known issues also absorbed their conversation, including boats that ply the seas smuggling charcoal that helps finance terrorist operations.

"CTF 152 has a good relationship with them, and they always welcome us warmly," Col. Alasker said of his UAE counterparts.

Multinational task forces such as CTF 151 have won notable victories against Somali-based piracy in the

**Left: Bahraini Defense Forces demonstrate boarding a ship during the International Mine Countermeasures Exercise in 2016 in Manama.**

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER ERIKA CARRILLO/U.S. NAVY

**Right: Pakistani warships perform a counterterrorism drill with assistance from the U.S. and other coalition partners in the Arabian Sea.** AFP/GETTY IMAGES

past few years, but naval commanders continue to demand vigilance lest the problem re-emerge in a different form.

As he relinquished command of CTF 151 in April 2016 to Rear Adm. Cheong, Rear Adm. Zahid Ilyas of Pakistan noted that nations are passing through unpredictable times in which criminals on the seas threaten energy shipments, freedom of navigation, and global security and stability.

"No one nation alone can resolve this menace, as piracy is a shared challenge which can only be addressed through collaborative and comprehensive international efforts," he said. ♦



## SENIOR LEADER PROFILE

# Yemeni Resilience

REAR ADM. ABDULLAH SALIM ALI ABDULLAH AL-NAKHAI HELPS REBUILD NAVAL FORCES

UNIPATH STAFF

*The people of Yemen are known for their patience, courage and the sacrifices they make for the sake of their homeland. The esteemed poet Abdullah Abdul Wahab Naaman said of the Yemeni people:*

*“We were never ever divided, nor ever torn.  
We have never set a bouquet on fire just to watch it burn.”*

Patience and sacrifice are required by men and leaders for the sake of their nations’ interests. They guide their people toward a hopeful outcome, despite the continuous challenges and ordeals facing a Yemen riddled with wounds, conflict and strife.

In this interview, we meet such a Yemeni leader — Rear Adm. Abdullah Salim Ali Abdullah Al-Nakhai, commander of the country’s Naval and Coastal Defense Forces. Adm. Abdullah is a first-class professional commander who shuns attention. He is widely respected by his Soldiers and colleagues. The admiral believes that navigating the nation toward security and stability requires strenuous efforts and a strong will to transcend and overcome challenging winds.

**Unipath: The infrastructure, buildings, and facilities of Yemeni Naval Forces have suffered grievous damage. Is there a plan to restore the readiness of the Naval and Coastal Defense forces?**

The Naval Forces are responsible for the protection of the Yemeni coastline on the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. The

coastline extends over 2,000 kilometers, and it is no easy task to secure it all. The forces are composed of the leadership of the Naval and Coastal Defenses forces, floating naval units, coastal defense units and the Marine Corps. The Air Force has several naval military bases, such as the naval base near Al Mukalla in the Hadhramaut governorate, the Tawahi and Al Hudaydah naval bases in the Aden governorate, the Bir Ali base in the Shabwa governorate, and the base on Socotra Island.

The infrastructure of the Naval and Coastal Defense forces has been destroyed. It is thus necessary to maintain, restore and rebuild the foundations and promote development, especially following the destruction of naval vessels. Vessel repair stations have been set up in Al Hudaydah, Aden and Al Mukalla. Vessels there have been destroyed and are in need of comprehensive structural equipment, installations and materials to keep up with developments in the maritime sector. Destruction was not limited to naval installations. Educational facilities, like the Naval Institute and Naval School, were also destroyed.

Despite all of this destruction, we are continuing to make efforts to restore the readiness of the Naval and Coastal Defense Forces. We have presented a comprehensive plan that includes an urgent program of requirements to restore the readiness of the Navy and rebuild infrastructure, installations and facilities. However, this will take a great deal of time, as well as material and human input. We hope to prepare the Navy so that it is able to protect our territorial waters, as well as our great wealth in fish stocks from overfishing. We have great ambitions to build a professional and national naval force loyal to God and country.

**Unipath: How are other countries cooperating in terms of training and preparation?**

There is a great deal of cooperation with other friendly countries and allies, both in specialized training and preparation and training in colleges and graduate schools in these countries. These countries include Pakistan, Great Britain, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan. We believe that



the stability, security and safety of the region fundamentally depends on our joint cooperation. Together, we must confront all the risks that threaten regional security and undermine the stability and safety of our countries and peoples. This depends on the strength of our relations within a framework that meets everyone's interests, especially in light of the growing threat of terrorism in Yemen, the Arabian Gulf and the world.

**Unipath: Piracy in Yemen's territorial waters poses a serious threat to the security and safety of maritime navigation and shipping in the most important waterways. What are the challenges that Yemen is facing in its fight against piracy?**

The most important challenge is Yemen's strategic location on the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb and the Arabian Sea. Other challenges include the domestic political, military and security situations, as well as the various terrorist organizations here at home and in nearby areas such as Somalia and the Horn of Africa. The coasts of the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb have witnessed a noticeable increase in piracy. This situation has threatened international navigation and shipping and regional maritime security in an unprecedented manner. This has prompted the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) to categorize these waters as "the most dangerous shipping area" in the world. In light of Yemen's realization of the seriousness of this criminal phenomenon, the country has affirmed its will to continue fighting maritime piracy and armed robbery of vessels in the Gulf of Aden and along the Somali coast.

Yemen's Navy has taken numerous urgent measures and actions to curb piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the

Strait of Bab el-Mandeb. It has begun to intensify its presence and security controls in the country's territorial waters. Yemen has also signed an agreement to establish a regional center in Sanaa to combat piracy featuring cooperation between Yemen's Ministry of Transportation and the International Maritime Organization. They will coordinate among the countries bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. The goal is to exchange information and manage shared efforts



**Rear Adm. Abdullah Salim Ali Abdullah Al-Nakhai, commander of the Yemeni Naval and Coastal Defense forces, right, receives an award from the Combined Maritime Forces.**

to combat piracy in conjunction with international forces on the order of the Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecutions and Intelligence Coordination Center.

For those of us in the Naval and Coastal Defense Forces, the biggest challenge we face is the destruction of our naval units and the lack of preparedness of some boats. Additionally, control centers, surveillance, and alarms play a part in combating piracy to ensure the security of our coasts, waters and shipping lanes. Likewise, since maritime piracy represents a terrorist threat, we need to cooperate with our partners in

preparing special units similar to the Marines and distribute them across the ports of Aden, Al Hudaydah and Al Mukalla, and around Socotra Island. It is also necessary to establish maritime monitoring and surveillance stations with radar to monitor piracy at sea and smuggling operations that are active in environments difficult to monitor on the coastline.

**Unipath: Can you talk about your personal and professional life?**

I am married with four boys and one girl. On April 7, 2016, I was appointed by presidential decree as commander of the Yemeni Naval and Coastal Defense Forces and promoted to the rank of general. Before that, I worked in various positions, such as commander of missile boats, commander of artillery boats, director of the Maritime Training Department, head of the Navigation Division and leadership training for the Navy, and director of the Naval School for the Naval and Coastal Defenses. I have participated in numerous domestic and international seminars and discussions, such as those in Washington, D.C., Sanaa, Djibouti, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar.

In 1986, I received a bachelor's degree in maritime navigation in Baku, the Republic of Azerbaijan, formerly in the Soviet Union. I also received a master's in military studies, leadership, and foundation in 1999 from the Supreme Military Academy in Damascus, Syria. I then received a fellowship from the Supreme War College in Sanaa from 2011 to 2012. Additionally, I actively participated in short courses and training such as, but not limited to, private sessions with commanders of artillery ships and missile boats and commanders of battalions, squadrons and naval divisions.



# Afghanistan Targets Illegal Mining

UNIPATH STAFF

Afghan officials are turning their attention to the illegal mining and illicit sale of the country's mineral resources, which earn Taliban terrorists an estimated \$20 million a year.

The mountains of Afghanistan hold between \$1 trillion and \$3 trillion in mineral resources, including lapis lazuli, a deep blue, semiprecious stone mined for centuries in northern Afghanistan's Badakhshan province.

Since 2014, at least 12,500 tons of lapis lazuli worth about \$200 million have been extracted, much of it illegally or in a way that avoided nearly \$30 million in government taxes, according to a report by the group Global Witness, which exposes resource-related corruption.

The country's mines also hold copper, iron ore, gold, coal, lithium, marble, gems and other minerals that could generate revenue for Afghan development.

Afghan officials are promising to do more to protect the minerals. "The Taliban not only are benefiting from opium and drug smuggling; unfortunately, they have also targeted the country's mines — mines that are a national asset of the country and the people," Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said in June 2016.

Lapis lazuli mining was outlawed in 2015, but the mines now lie in a region controlled by the Taliban and warlords of varying allegiances. As many as 10,000 deposits are estimated to be outside government control, according to a report by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, a Kabul-based independent think tank.

As a result, mineral smuggling has become the Taliban's second-richest funding source after drugs produced in the southern Afghan provinces. The prized Afghan lapis lazuli is reportedly sold for between \$2,000 and \$4,000 per kilogram.

According to Global Witness, the government lost at least \$17.5 million in revenue from lapis lazuli in 2014 and \$10 million in 2015, while the Taliban has paid millions to protect the illegal operations from police. The group said Taliban commanders also operate government-owned marble mines in Helmand province, where they reap \$10 million annually.

Global Witness warns that the Badakhshan mines



REUTERS

Lapis lazuli is sorted inside a shop in Kabul, Afghanistan.

have become a strategic priority for a local terrorist Daesh affiliate, which has emerged mostly in the country's east, along the border with Pakistan. "Unless the Afghan government acts rapidly to regain control, the battle for the lapis mines is set to intensify and further destabilize the country, as well as fund extremism," Global Witness said.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani compared Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the race for minerals has fueled conflict for decades, and he said he would urge Afghanistan's parliament to classify lapis lazuli as a conflict mineral.

The international classification indicates that a product's sale contributes to war and human rights abuses. The best-known example is "blood diamonds," long used to fund wars across Africa. A United Nations resolution in 1988 proposed measures that could trace diamonds from their origin to point of sale.

Should Afghanistan's lapis lazuli be classified as a conflict mineral, it would compel Kabul to regulate the mines and possibly set up a system to ensure accountability and transparency for each stone, a proposal made by Afghanistan's former minister of mines.

Sources: The Associated Press; TOLO News; Reuters





## THE WEAKENING OF DAESH

UNIPATH STAFF

Daesh continues to lose large portions of the territory it once controlled in Syria and Iraq. In a July 2016 report, the research group IHS said Daesh lost 12 percent of its territory in the first six months of 2016. That followed a 14 percent drop in 2015, when its territory shrank to 78,000 square kilometers, a loss of 12,800 square kilometers.

At the time of the July 2016 report, Daesh controlled roughly 68,300 square kilometers in Iraq and Syria, roughly the size of Ireland.

"Over the past 18 months, the Islamic State has continued to lose territory at an increasing rate," said Columb Strack, a senior IHS analyst. But he warned that the terrorists would likely try to divert attention from their failures by increasing attacks in the Middle East and Europe and sabotaging economic infrastructure.

In March 2016, Daesh lost the ancient city of Palmyra. Last year, the group lost control of Tel Abyad in Raqqqa province in Syria. Later in the year, the strategic city of Fallujah, 50 kilometers west of Baghdad, was liberated by Iraqi forces.

The Pentagon said in May 2016 that Daesh had lost 45 percent of the territory once under its control in Iraq and 16 to 20 percent of the territory under its control in Syria.

"Over the coming year we are likely to see more towns and cities become isolated from the core caliphate, as was the case in Ramadi and Fallujah," Strack said. "This could enable the fragmentation and gradual defeat of the Islamic State as a conventional force."

Sources: IHS, Middle East Monitor

**Iraqi forces guard a mosque after driving Daesh from Fallujah.**

REUTERS

## QATAR PROMOTES PEACE IN REGION

UNIPATH STAFF

Creating peace in the Middle East should be the focus of countries throughout the region, Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani of Qatar told a gathering of ambassadors in Oslo, Norway, in August 2016.

"The fighting in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen must come to an end because the longer the fighting, the greater the sacrifice of human capital and the more children who will be deprived of their right to an education," the Qatari foreign minister said. "And the longer the fighting, the more likely that moderate young men and women will be radicalized and lured into the extremist camp as a result of their desperation and hopelessness. I think it is obvious to all of us that the importance of peace-making and reconciliation efforts in the Middle East has never been more critical than it is today."

He spoke about the four pillars of Qatari foreign policy: consolidating international peace and security by encouraging peaceful resolutions of international disputes; supporting the right to self-determination; non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states; and cooperation with all nations that seek peace.

Qatar has played a role in solving regional conflicts among rival Lebanese factions and in Sudan. It has also worked to enhance peace in Libya. "In every mediation effort, we kept our doors open to all parties in the dispute in order to bring about a lasting peace," he said.

Sources: Qatar News Agency, Qatar Tribune

**Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani of Qatar**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





## Kuwait Seminar Counters Extremism

STORY AND PHOTO BY **SGT. YOUTOY MARTIN**/U.S. ARMY CENTRAL

Kuwaiti military personnel and staff from the Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations partnered in May 2016 in Kuwait City with U.S. Army Central (ARCENT) chaplains in a bilateral security seminar on countering religious extremism.

The seminar gave ARCENT chaplains a forum to learn from their Kuwaiti partners and have an open discussion about misconceptions and misunderstandings created by violent extremist groups such as Daesh.

"Our Muslim partners are very willing to get up and say these acts by extremist groups are a misrepresentation of Islam, and the group needs to be defeated," said Col. Jeffrey D. Hawkins, ARCENT command chaplain. "It's great to experience our Muslim partners being energized to speak out."

Hawkins said the seminar was a step toward multilateral engagements with partner nations in the region focused on extremism. "We would speak with one voice with our Muslim partners in the lead stating that Daesh is a misrepresentation of Islam," Hawkins said.

Since a key leader engagement in August 2015, the partnership has grown as the members work to develop ways to counter extremism and discredit terror groups.

The four-day seminar concluded with a cultural exchange trip to the grand mosque in Kuwait City. Sheikh Abdullah M.M. Alshoreka, secretary of the Supreme Commission for the Promotion of Moderation, was a guest speaker.

He spoke of what Islam is, what it represents and the



**Col. Jeffrey D. Hawkins, command chaplain with U.S. Army Central, speaks with members of the Kuwaiti military and council of ministers in Kuwait City.**

path Muslims should follow. "Discussion is the first step to dealing with extremist thoughts," Alshoreka said. "We all are in the same ship. Islam can work together with other religions and move forward with them."

ARCENT consistently partners with regional nations to maintain peace and stability in the region. A proposed multi-lateral symposium would see more Middle East and Gulf Cooperation Council partners involved.

"Our commander's vision is to cultivate and accelerate partnerships," Hawkins said. "We are doing this to protect national interests and readiness by countering religious extremism."

## Bahrain's UN Ambassador Focuses on Children

UNIPATH  
STAFF

Ambassador Jamal Fares Al Rowaie, Bahrain's permanent representative to the United Nations, chaired a U.N. panel in June 2016 that addressed how children are harmed by violent extremism. The discussion examined ways to reinforce existing strategies that counter violent extremism with a specific focus on children.

Speakers talked about factors that spark radicalization and violent terrorism, and shared experiences in rehabilitation and the social reintegration of children involved in terrorist acts. It was part of a high-level U.N. General Assembly conversation about the impact of violent extremism on children, often the most vulnerable victims of radicalization and violence.

According to the U.N., violent extremism represents one of the most complex challenges faced in the world today. And the threats children face require a redoubling of efforts in refining responses and addressing the challenges. Sources: Bahrain News Agency, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).



**A young boy walks amid the carnage of a suicide bombing in Baghdad, Iraq.**





# Kazakhstan Hosts Multinational Exercise

STORY AND PHOTO BY MAJ. CHRISTOPHER BRAUTIGAM/U.S. ARMY CENTRAL

The Illisky Training Center in Kazakhstan hosted the first phase of the annual Steppe Eagle multinational training exercises in April 2016.

Participants included Soldiers and medics from the Kazakh Peacekeeping Battalion; instructors from the Kazakhstan Peacekeeping Operations Training Center; Soldiers from the United Kingdom's 1st Rifles Battalion, 160th Brigade; and United States Soldiers from the Arizona National Guard.

Steppe Eagle is a two-phased exercise that enhances the partnership and interoperability between nations. Phase two was held in the U.K. in July 2016.

"These events make our friendship stronger," said Brig. Gen. Almas Dzhumakeyev, commander of Kazakh Airmobile Forces. "They bring us closer, meaning we will be much more effective in our future operations."

The first phase featured six days of situational training led by instructors from the peacekeeping operations center and included base defense operations, convoy operations, helicopter operations and patrolling. The event also included a sports day featuring friendly competition among the nations, and a three-day training exercise that tested the peacekeepers' ability to operate in a realistic and dynamic environment.

"It's a good experience," said Capt. Asset Myrzabajev, an instructor at the peacekeeping operations center. "To have U.S. and U.K. Soldiers come to share their



**Soldiers from the Kazakhstan Peacekeeping Battalion practice riot control during Steppe Eagle.**

experiences and bring in new techniques and tactics from their deployments, it helps us to get better and better."

Though the event was mostly focused on military tasks and planning, many of the participants recognized there was more to learn and appreciate during events like this. "There is a lot of sharing, but I think it's very important that we not only share military techniques but also culture," said Capt. Ruslan Bekturov, the peacekeeping battalion engineer.

## UZBEKISTAN TACKLES SECURITY THREATS

UNIPATH STAFF

Uzbekistan has joined with other Central Asia countries and the United States in agreeing on a framework for tackling security threats posed by Daesh and other violent extremist organizations.

The group of countries, which includes Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and the United States, works to find solutions to common concerns. At the group's first gathering, in Samarkand

in November 2015, the foreign ministers agreed to develop regional security projects and promote economic partnerships.

Meeting in Washington in August 2016, the ministers decided to establish a Global Counterterrorism Forum Regional Dialogue to confront the challenges posed by terrorists and radicalization in Central Asia. The dialogue will bring together policymakers and subject-matter

experts to share insights into the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, including best practices and regional approaches for countering the radicalization, departure and return of fighters.

The ministers will also focus on business competitiveness in the region by working to increase exports and reduce the cost and time of moving goods across borders.

Sources: The Diplomat, UzDaily.com



## Tajik, U.S. Officials Discuss Press Freedom

MAJ. ANGEL JACKSON/U.S. ARMY CENTRAL

Social media and press freedoms generated the most discussion when communications officers in Tajikistan met with their U.S. counterparts in Dushanbe in April 2016.

“The Tajik public affairs officers were very interested in our use of social media,” said Col. Thomas Gilleran, U.S. Army Central (ARCENT) deputy chief of public affairs. “They were amazed that we allow unsolicited interaction.”

Army public affairs professionals rely on social media to connect with audiences, and Soldiers are often the best storytellers. “The most important thing we did during the exchange was to discuss the value of a free press with our Tajik counterparts,” Gilleran said.

U.S. and Tajik public affairs officers share many of the same practices when it comes to community engagement and highlighting military efforts. But one difference is the relationship with the media. Gilleran discussed the unique relationship of Army public affairs with the media, and he described what freedom of the press means in the U.S.

“Freedom of the press has a different meaning in different countries,” said Khusrov Aminov, Tajikistan Ministry of Defense communications officer.

Gilleran and Maj. Neysa Williams, ARCENT public affairs community and media relations officer, gave examples of how bad press sometimes results in good changes.

“The media sometimes draws attention to issues that force changes in an organization,” said Williams. “For example, some veterans were having a hard time getting medical



**Tajikistan communications officers and U.S. Army Central public affairs Soldiers gather for a media relations exchange.**

U.S. ARMY CENTRAL

care and when the media started talking about it, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs started to make changes or at least share more information.”

Aminov said he appreciated the opportunity to discuss Army public affairs with the ARCENT team, and looked forward to future meetings.

The exchange was one of many partnership events conducted by U.S. Army Central throughout the year to enhance interoperability with Tajikistan.

## JORDAN SUPPORTS IRAQ’S WAR ON TERROR

UNIPATH  
STAFF

At a meeting in Amman with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari in June 2016, His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of Jordan praised the Iraqi Army’s efforts to counter terrorist groups such as Daesh.

The two leaders discussed ways to preserve the security and stability of the region while strengthening relations between the two countries. The king expressed a readiness to help Iraq in its battle against Daesh.

Al-Jaafari said Iraq is defending its sovereignty and dignity and that military



**Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari**

operations in Fallujah were aimed at rescuing civilians from Daesh and continuing to liberate Iraqi territory from the impurity of terrorism.

“This war is not a traditional one, since Daesh is using civilians as human shields and is killing as many civilians as possible,” he said.

Al-Jaafari also met the Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh at the Jordanian Foreign Affairs Ministry in Amman, where they discussed the importance of cooperation and coordination in facing Daesh.

Sources: AhlulBayt News Agency, Iraqi Foreign Ministry





# Lebanon Bolsters Border Defenses

UNIPATH STAFF

The delivery of three U.S.-made military helicopters to Lebanon's Army is expected to bolster its defenses near the border with Syria. The \$26 million Huey II helicopters demonstrate the United States' continued commitment to support the Army's modernization plans, said Richard H. Jones, U.S. charge d'affaires and interim ambassador, during a ceremony in Beirut in March 2016. The U.S. has been a major supporter of Lebanon's Army, which is fighting Daesh and al-Qaida's Syrian branch in border areas.

Gen. Manuel Kerjian, Lebanon's deputy chief of staff, said U.S. military aid to Lebanon is boosting the level of combat preparedness "and consequently its capability to confront terrorist organizations."

The delivery coincided with a visit to Lebanon by British Foreign Minister Philip Hammond, who said Lebanon is an important part of the fight against terrorism and pledged his country's continued support.

"We are delighted by the way that the U.K. support has been translated by the Lebanese Armed Forces in strengthening border security and enabling the Armed Forces to take the fight to Daesh and keep Lebanon safe," Hammond said after meeting with Lebanese Premier Tammam Salam.

Later in Beirut, Hammond announced Britain would spend 19.8 million British pounds (U.S. \$28.5 million) to continue "the monitoring and training and mentoring of the Armed Forces, including the land border regiments and train another 5,000 more Lebanese Soldiers at the British sponsored-facility" in northern Lebanon.

"Our aim is for Lebanon to have secured 100 percent of its border with Syria," Hammond said, adding that Britain has trained over 11,000 Lebanese Soldiers "in the specialist techniques of urban counterterrorism." Sources: The Associated Press, Reuters

**UH-1H Huey II helicopters are delivered to Beirut Air Base, Lebanon.**

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



## KYRGYZ REPUBLIC CRACKS DOWN ON TERRORISTS, RECRUITERS

UNIPATH STAFF

**T**he Kyrgyz Republic's security forces are cracking down on suspected terrorists and the recruiters who lure them to fight for Daesh and other violent extremist organizations.

In June 2016, the Kyrgyz State Committee on National Security reported the arrests of several recruiters who had been urging Kyrgyz citizens to join extremist groups in Syria. That same month, the committee reported the arrests of several people it said had undergone terrorist training and fought for terror groups in Syria.

More than 200 people have left the Kyrgyz Republic to join terrorist groups in war-torn Syria, according to the Kyrgyz Interior Ministry, and more than 20 people have been arrested for recruiting terrorists.

Kyrgyz police said about 4,000 people were identified as adherents of extremist views in June 2016, a significant jump from 2015. The Kyrgyz interior minister said 63 criminal cases related to the expression of extremist views were opened in the first five months of 2016.

Sources: Eurasianet.org, 24.kg news agency, Alwaght.com

## TURKMENISTAN LAUNCHES NEW PATROL BOAT

UNIPATH STAFF

**T**urkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdymuhamedov attended a launch ceremony in May 2016 at a ship repair facility of the Hazar Maritime Unit of Border Troops. Applause erupted when Berdymuhamedov pressed the button to launch a new patrol boat.

The boat was built by local specialists using technology and computer-assisted systems that meet international standards. Turkey provided materials and technical assistance, according to reports that said six of the boats are being built.

While at the port, Berdymuhamedov examined other patrol and naval vessels that have been used by maritime border guards at various times, and congratulated the officials responsible for launching the new boats.

Sources: IHS Jane's 360, tdh.gov.tm



# Egypt Receives Helicopter Carriers

UNIPATH STAFF

Egypt has increased its combat readiness and ability to carry out long-term missions at sea with the \$1 billion purchase of two French Mistral helicopter carriers.

“We now have advanced capabilities in confronting terrorism within our borders and on our shores,” Egyptian Minister of Defense Sedky Sobhi said at a ceremony in Saint-Nazaire, France, in June 2016.

In addition to 450 personnel, the ship — known as the “Swiss Army Knife” of the French Navy for its versatility — can hold up to 24 aircraft, 40 tanks, 50 armored vehicles and three radar units. It has a missile system for air defense and room on deck for six helicopter landing pads. It is also equipped with a 20-room hospital, complete with surgical facilities. Before delivery to Egypt, a crew of 170 Egyptian naval personnel trained aboard the ships.

Cairo has sought to boost its military power in the face of a two-year insurgency in northern Sinai and fears that the conflict in neighboring Libya could spill over.

In April 2016, France signed separate deals worth about \$2.26 billion with Egypt during a visit to Cairo by French President Francois Hollande. The deals included a contract for a military telecommunications satellite expected to be built by France’s Airbus Space Systems and Thales Alenia Space.

Egypt last year also acquired a French frigate as part of a \$5.8 billion contract for 24 Rafale warplanes, France’s first overseas export of the fighter jet.

The Mistral helicopter carriers were initially built for the Russian Navy. However, Moscow lost the ships when France joined the rest of the European Union in imposing economic and arms trade sanctions following its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. Sources: Reuters, *Egypt Independent*, Defense News

**The two Mistral-class helicopter carriers dock in Saint-Nazaire, France.**

REUTERS

# Oman Rewrites Laws on Terror Financing

UNIPATH STAFF

Oman has toughened its money-laundering and terror-financing laws, part of its ongoing efforts to battle financial crimes that support violent extremist groups.

The National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing issued a statement saying the changes toughen the sanctions for financial institutions that violate the laws, tighten the process for assessing risky transactions, and strengthen laws governing customs declarations and the extradition of international suspects. Additionally, the Financial Intelligence Unit was deemed a National Center for Financial Information, bringing it administrative independence.

Announced in May 2016, the changes “will contribute in combatting money laundering and terrorist financing by addressing legislative shortcomings, supporting the national preventive measures and fighting against economic, financial, social and political risks that may result from money laundering and terrorist financing at the local and international levels,” the statement said.

The changes reflect best practices recommended by the International Financial Action Task Force and its counterpart, the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

A group of experts recommended the changes after conducting a comprehensive review of Oman’s laws. The group examined previous rulings and regulations and studied international treaties and agreements related to combating money laundering and terror financing.

Sources: Central Bank of Oman, *Times of Oman*, MuscatDaily.com





## UAE, Combined Task Force Discuss Smuggling

UNIPATH STAFF

The Kuwaiti commander of Combined Task Force (CTF) 152 met with his United Arab Emirates (UAE) naval counterparts to discuss ways to stop smuggling that is financing the al-Shabaab terrorist group.

“This was a great opportunity to meet with the director of the UAE Navy to discuss the challenges we face,” CTF 152 Col. Nayef Alasker said during the June 2016 meeting with the UAE Navy and Coast Guard. “CTF 152 has a good relationship with them, and they always welcome us warmly.”

According to a report by U.N. Dispatch, which covers United Nations issues, the illicit trade in charcoal is al-Shabaab’s single most important source of income and is comparable to the Taliban’s trade in Afghan opium poppies. Interrupting that trade has a beneficial effect on the security and prosperity of coalition nations waging war on terror.

The report noted that al-Shabaab used its control of ports, mainly in the Somali city of Kismayo, to exact taxes on the export of charcoal and to trade charcoal for sugar.

“Al-Shabaab generates millions of dollars of revenues each month through a coordinated trading cycle built upon the export of charcoal, which in turn finances the import of sugar, much of which is subsequently smuggled across as contraband into neighboring countries,” the report said. “Bank accounts in the Gulf States where the profits of this trade are deposited can be used to launder voluntary contributions to Al-Shabaab through fraudulent invoicing, overvaluing of import proceeds and undervaluing of exports.”



**Kenya Defense Force Soldiers serving in the African Union Mission in Somalia patrol stockpiles of charcoal near Kismayo.** REUTERS

In addition to charcoal smuggling, CTF and UAE officials discussed mutual challenges faced during maritime security operations. Representing the UAE were Director of Naval Operations General Abdullah Al-Shahi and Commander Salem Al-Kendi of the Coast Guard.

CTF 152 is part of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), created after 9/11 to help counter the threat from international terrorism and later expanded to include counterpiracy operations off the Horn of Africa.

Commanded from its headquarters in Bahrain, CMF operates three Combined Task Forces across the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Somali Basin, Northern Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf, covering nearly 3.2 million square miles of ocean bordered by 21 countries. Sources: Combined Maritime Forces, undispatch.com

## DEFEATING TERROR IMPROVES THE ECONOMY

UNIPATH STAFF

The success of the anti-terror Zarb-e-Azb military operation in Pakistan is providing a much-needed boost to the country’s economy, Pakistani Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said.

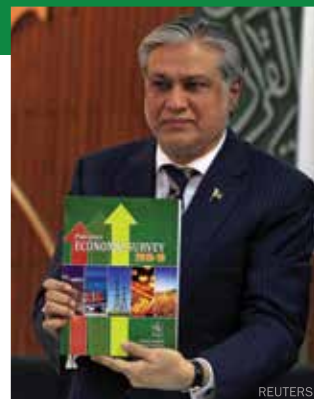
“We are now in the final phase of operation Zarb-e-Azb, and it is hoped that soon we would get rid of terrorism,” he said, “which would help further increase foreign direct investment in the country.”

Speaking at a press conference in

June 2016, he said Pakistan has lost \$118 billion in the past 15 years since terrorism intensified. But the financial picture is improving. Economic losses related to terror have dropped from \$10 billion in 2015 to an estimated \$6 billion in 2016, he said.

Caring for temporarily displaced people will be the government’s priority as peace is restored, he added.

Source: Associated Press Pakistan



**Pakistani Finance Minister Ishaq Dar** REUTERS



# INTERNATIONAL FORCES GATHER FOR CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS WORKSHOP

UNIPATH STAFF

Whether it's providing food and medical care to refugees or helping to build schools in remote areas, joint civil-military operations can have a huge impact on civilians and, ultimately, on the stability of a region.

In June 2016, an international group of officers met at U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) for the inaugural Trans-Regional Civil Military Stability Operations Workshop.

Participants came from Australia, Colombia, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, the Philippines and the United States, along with NATO representatives from Germany and the Netherlands. The goal was to develop a better understanding of civil-military operations across the world and to facilitate their synchronization and coordination.

"We have to exchange information in order to achieve our objectives," said Lebanese Brig. Gen. Youssef Mechref, the workshop's keynote speaker.

Brig. Gen. Mechref led the effort to formalize civil-military operations

in the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). In 2012, he helped establish the LAF's Civil-Military Cooperation Section (CIMIC). The section was elevated in 2015 to a directorate, and its work is now recognized as an important domestic security tool that contributes to the LAF's reputation as reliable and trustworthy. As a result, LAF unit commanders increasingly request CIMIC support for their missions. The projects are varied based on community needs — from establishing health clinics and refurbishing schools and government buildings to planting trees.

An important workshop topic was the transnational nature of threats and the shared impact of civil-military operations. Terrorist groups like al-Shabaab, Daesh, Boko Haram and al-Qaida have stoked instability far beyond the areas where they operate. For instance, European countries have been impacted by refugees escaping violence in Iraq and Syria. Foreign fighters are traveling across the world

to these conflict-ridden regions and could export violence to their home countries if and when they return.

"The world is getting more and more complex," Brig. Gen. Mechref said. That is why civil-military operations are important not only in hot spots or unstable regions, but also in areas where maintaining the respect and support for governments and militaries is critically important, he said.

Brig. Gen. Mechref said he was grateful SOCOM hosted the workshop because military professionals involved in civil affairs can learn from an exchange of ideas and best practices.

Col. Tony Thacker of SOCOM called the workshop a success. "Once we visualized each person's activities, it became very apparent where we had duplicate efforts or where there were gaps and seams that can be exploited by others," Thacker said. The outcome was better synchronization of global efforts so teams can be more successful in the future and measure their progress.

**Lebanese Brig. Gen. Youssef Mechref speaks at the inaugural Trans-Regional Civil Military Stability Operations Workshop at U.S. Special Operations Command.**

TECH. SGT. ANGELITA LAWRENCE/  
U.S. AIR FORCE







# Yemen Foils Terror Attack in Mukalla

REUTERS

Yemen foiled an attack in June 2016 by al-Qaida terrorists who planned to target local administrative headquarters in the city of Mukalla. According to reports, security forces found a car laden with explosives that an al-Qaida suspect planned to detonate.

“We received intelligence about al-Qaida’s plans to launch a major terrorist attack in Mukalla aimed at destabilizing the city and creating panic amongst its residents,” the news agency WAM quoted Gen. Faraj Salmin, commander of Yemen’s 2nd Military Region Command in the eastern province of Hadramout, as saying.

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) largely withdrew from Mukalla in April 2016 when government and Emirati Soldiers seized the city, which had been used by extremists to raise money from smuggling amid the chaos of civil war.

Special teams from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Armed Forces provided operational assistance to Yemeni forces to rid the city of remaining AQAP members. An al-Qaida informational technology expert known as Abu Hafs al Shahri was arrested during one of the search operations in the city, WAM said.

The city on the Arabian Sea has been the center of a rich mini-state that AQAP built up as it exploited conflict between government loyalists backed by a Gulf Arab coalition, of which the UAE is a part, and Houthi rebels.

AQAP, which has planned several foiled bombing attempts on Western-bound airlines and claimed credit for the 2015 attack at the Charlie Hebdo magazine’s offices in Paris, sought to carve out a quasi-state last year, offering to export 2 million barrels of oil with the approval of Yemen’s government, which refused any such deal.



Mukalla Harbor, Yemen

GETTY IMAGES



## SAUDI KING: PROTECT YOUTH FROM RADICALIZATION

UNIPATH STAFF

His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, has promised to retaliate against the supporters of violent extremist groups that prey on the vulnerabilities of young people.

**The bombing in Medina sparks outrage across the Muslim world, including this protest by Pakistanis.**

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

His comments came a day after suicide bombers struck three cities in what appeared to be a coordinated attack in July 2016.

In a speech marking Eid al-Fitr, King Salman said a major challenge facing Saudi Arabia was preserving hope for youth who face the risk of radicalization. “We will strike with an iron hand those who target the minds and thoughts ... of our dear youth,” the king said.

Four security officers were killed in the attacks that targeted foreign diplomats, Shiite worshippers and a security headquarters at a mosque in the holy city of Medina. The attacks appeared to have been timed to coincide with the approach of Eid al-Fitr.

The United Nations human rights chief described the bombing outside the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina as “an attack on Islam itself” and said many Muslims expressed shock that their second-holiest site had been targeted.

“This is one of the holiest sites in Islam, and for such an attack to take place there, during Ramadan, can be considered a direct attack on Muslims all across the world,” said Zeid Ra’ad Al-Hussein, U.N. high commissioner for human rights and a member of the Jordanian royal family.

Religious and political leaders across the Middle East denounced the attacks. Sources: Reuters, Gulf News

# SHARING KNOWLEDGE

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



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