

KEY LEADER EDITION

Pakistan Foils  
Al-Qaida Jailbreak

Iraq Seeks to Take  
Daesh Offline

Bahrain Condemns  
Terror Attack

# UNIPATH

COOPERATIVE  
SECURITY

COMBATING  
VIOLENT  
EXTREMISM

BATTLE OF THE  
INFORMATION  
ENVIRONMENT

PROFESSIONAL  
FORCES





Cable car  
in Jounieh,  
Lebanon

ISTOCK



The Dar al-Hajar is a royal palace in Wadi Dhar near Sanaa, Yemen. It was the home of Imam Yahya Muhammad Hamid ed-Din, ruler of Yemen. ISTOCK





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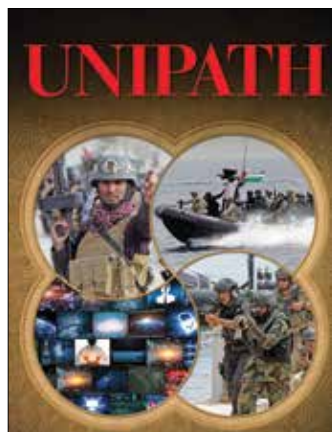
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This special edition of *Unipath* explores the best practices for defeating violent extremist organizations operating in the Middle East and Central and South Asia.

UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION

# UNIPATH

## Special Edition

Volume 7

## CENTCOM COMMANDER

GENERAL  
JOSEPH L. VOTEL  
U.S. Army



## CONTACT US

### Unipath

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

CENTCOM.  
UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL

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# KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE



I am proud and grateful for the opportunity to serve as the 13th commander of U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM). Together with our regional partners, the men and women of the command contribute in meaningful ways to the pursuit of improved stability and security

throughout the USCENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR). Ours is a very important mission, one that is vital to the national security interests of the United States and our partners.

Since taking command on 30 March, 2016, I have focused the majority of my efforts in three areas: 1) improving my understanding and perspective of the central region; 2) building and cultivating strong relationships with our regional partners; and 3) ensuring that USCENTCOM is responsive to the needs of our partners. We intend to work closely with our partners and allies and to reassure them of our continued strong support.

This publication, USCENTCOM's *Unipath* magazine, provides a very effective means for communicating with our partners in the region. We use it to inform readers about our various endeavors in the USCENTCOM AOR, while also highlighting the great work being done by many of our regional partners. This special edition of the magazine provides an overview of the themes that will appear in the next four editions. The intent is to provide new insights on familiar topics to stimulate discussion among our readers.

The four upcoming themes are countering violent extremism, cooperative security, the battle of the information environment, and the professionalism of military forces. We as military professionals recognize the significant role that we play in the fight against violent extremist groups such as Daesh and al-Qaida. We also recognize that we cannot win this fight alone. We must work closely with

our regional partners in support of the wide range of lethal and nonlethal activities that aim to degrade these groups' capabilities and ultimately defeat them.

By working together we are not only more effective, but the outcomes that we achieve will be more enduring. There are many examples of the tremendous cooperation that is ongoing in the central region, including our Combined Maritime Forces, a 31-nation naval coalition based in Bahrain that helped to rid the seas of Somali piracy, while at the same time ensuring the free flow of commerce through key shipping lanes in the Arabian Gulf. USCENTCOM also sponsors numerous large-scale exercises throughout the year that bring together many of our regional partners. Such collaboration will remain essential to achieving increased stability in the region going forward.

At the same time, we must find ways to effectively counter our adversaries in the information battlespace. There is great work being done in this area, both in the United States and in the central region. The United Arab Emirates' Sawab Center is a good example of this; teams there are battling extremism digitally through the use of persuasive information campaigns. These types of efforts must – *and will* – remain a top priority.

As a commander, I have spent much of my military career working closely with the special operations forces in countries such as Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan. I have seen firsthand the tremendous benefits gained through cooperation among individuals and partner nations. As I look ahead, I am confident that our continued and close collaboration will achieve meaningful outcomes that benefit our nations and the strategically important central region.

I hope you enjoy this special edition of *Unipath*. We hope that it will stimulate great discussions. We also encourage you to share your views by contributing to the magazine through articles, interviews or other means. You can reach members of the *Unipath* team at CENTCOM. UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL. *Keep up the great work!*

**Joseph L. Votel**  
GEN, USA  
*Commander of U.S. Central Command*





# COUNTERING TERRORISM

## from the Front Lines

UNIPATH STAFF



### IRAQI COUNTER-TERRORISM SERVICE COMMANDER **GEN. TALIB SHAGHATHI ALKENANI** DESCRIBES THE WAR AGAINST DAESH

Members of Iraqi Counter-terrorism Service flash the “V” for victory sign on December 28, 2015, at the government complex after recapturing Ramadi, Anbar province. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The battle of Ramadi is considered one of the most important battles in the war to defeat Daesh. The terrorists bragged they would transform Ramadi into a massive grave filled with the bodies of those attempting to take back the city. They placed explosives on the roads leading into the city, in the sewage system and in homes. They built defensive measures and trenches to prolong their hold on Ramadi. However, the military plan to liberate Ramadi and the swift and effective work of Iraqi special operation forces paralyzed Daesh, and it lost this key city. *Unipath* met with staff Gen. Talib Shaghathi Alkenani, the head of Iraqi Counter-terrorism Service and the commander of joint forces, who led this historic battle.

***Unipath:*** How important is information warfare in defeating Daesh?

**Gen. Alkenani:** Daesh is an unconventional enemy that uses social media and discussion forums to spread its toxic ideology and deceive young Muslims about the so-called Islamic caliphate and use them as fodder for its sectarian wars. Security agencies ignored the terrorists’ activities online for many years, and the consequences have been horrific as we witness fighters come from all over the world to join Daesh in Syria. Therefore, the security agencies must counter the lies of terrorists and track them online, in social media and on smartphone apps to prevent more recruitment among young Muslims. As we liberate areas once held by the terrorists, we discover computer networks used by Daesh to broadcast news about fake victories and spread hateful ideology to specific sites

online. We found a complete program about attracting youth on Twitter and Facebook. They have experts in fabricated pictures and videos and teams of hackers and online promoters and recruiters. They use social media and discussion forums not just for recruitment but also financing, communication and coordinating attacks. Social media is considered oxygen for Daesh, and we must cut its access to the Internet and expose its lies in cyberspace.

***Unipath:*** You have previously mentioned the danger of Daesh recruiting children. During the recapture of Ramadi, did you confront any minors fighting for the terrorists?

**Gen. Alkenani:** The recruitment of children is a very dangerous issue. We detained minors while they attempted to flee the battlefield, and we found the remains of unknown



foreign fighters whose ages ranged between 15 and 17. Unfortunately, Daesh was able to deceive these minors.

**Unipath:** How can Daesh claim it is establishing a caliphate and at the same time commit crimes denounced by Islam like looting, killing innocents and enslaving women?

**Gen. Alkenani:** Daesh used religion as cover for its crimes to recruit young Muslims who have limited education. These terrorists have neither faith nor humanity. Their main goal is to spill the blood of innocents and ignite sectarian war everywhere in the world. Their acts reveal their true face. The majority are ex-convicts or fugitives who found safe haven to satisfy their savage instincts that they try to justify by using religion. The ugly result of what happened in Sinjar proved that these criminals are looking to fulfill their sexual desires, not faith or belief. Our Yazidi brothers have existed in the land between the rivers since the dawn of civilization; Muslims never harassed them during the Abbasid Caliphate. The false claims of the hypocrite Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri, the person known as Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, that his “caliphate” follows the Prophet’s legacy, is a flat-out falsehood. The majority of Muslims condemn them and describe them as the “seed of the devil,” “neo-Kharijites” and the “astray.” The motive of Daesh behind this disgraceful crime is to attract sexually unstable young men to justify the ugly crime of rape. Islamic history offers no reference points to commit such massive crimes against non-Muslims or to force their children into marriage. This false caliphate spilled the blood of Muslims and destroyed their cities and turned them into refugees.

**Unipath:** How was the Daesh gang able to control Ramadi for so long?

**Gen. Alkenani:** What we found in Ramadi proved the brutality of Daesh. These terrorists were careless about the lives of innocents. They forced the young to join or threatened them with death. They looted food from homes under the excuse that they were sharing it with mujahedeen. They



prohibited the Internet and satellite TV. They launched a beheading and lashing campaign in public places to terrorize citizens. Mere suspicion was sufficient to kill innocents. They invaded the privacy of homes, claiming they were searching for former Anbar Awakening members. They confined women to their homes and limited the movement of men. Anyone caught by Daesh trying to leave town would be beheaded in the public square. They published leaflets to terrorize people and prevent them from fleeing. Daesh’s control of Ramadi was like a nightmare for the locals who were trapped and became hostages at the hand of terrorists. Daesh used populated areas as their defensive lines and placed command and control among residential areas to avoid airstrikes.

**Unipath:** Did Daesh cause significant damage in the city?

**Gen. Alkenani:** After they took control of the city, terrorists entrenched inside homes and dug tunnels beneath the homes to avoid airstrikes. In the home where external walls were shared, they made holes to move between the houses and used these as their main supply lines. In addition, they detonated the homes of tribal sheikhs who in the past had refused to cooperate with this twisted ideology. They planted booby traps and set charges in the majority of the city and the sewage system as defensive measures against the Iraqi Armed Forces. During the offensive operation to liberate Ramadi, coalition airpower and the Iraqi Air Force focused attacks on Daesh positions on the outskirts of the city and cut all supply



lines to limit civilian casualties. We surrounded and sealed the city and asked citizens to go to specific safe areas so that we could destroy all enemy checkpoints and obstacles that could stop citizens. Daesh destroyed a significant portion of the city and its infrastructures and detonated many residential areas during our advance. Their goal was to turn the city into ruins. The terrorists were wearing suicide vests and fighting inside homes rigged to explode to maximize casualties and slow our advance.

**Unipath:** You said Daesh cut through shared walls between homes to ease their movements. Isn't violating the privacy of home a clear violation of Islam?

**Gen. Alkenani:** Yes, they had no regard for people's privacy. Religion and norms prohibit the entering of residential homes without the permission of their owners. True Muslims must respect this sensitive issue and never invade the privacy of other Muslims. The terrorists were moving day and night between the homes, sometimes moving through bedrooms and kitchens. They showed no respect to the residents, and whoever complained faced death.

**Unipath:** How did your forces catch Daesh by surprise and liberate Ramadi swiftly?

**Gen. Alkenani:** We had precise intelligence about the terrorist formation areas, their ammunition and weapons caches and defensive lines. We even knew the location of their prisons and supply lines. We relied on the bravery of tribal men who faithfully worked to liberate their city from terror.

In addition, the role of Iraqi Air Force and our friends in coalition air forces was very important for reconnaissance and surveillance of enemy movements and positions, which made the planning stage smooth. Furthermore, the concentrated training that counterterrorism forces underwent for months in preparation for this battle helped achieve significant results. Daesh was paralyzed after the powerful and precise airstrikes a few days before the ground offensive, and they were caught by surprise at how fast the counterterrorist forces reached Ramadi's downtown. It was a fierce fight in which the fighters of Iraqi special operations and counterterrorists reached a milestone and brought glory to Iraqis.

**Unipath:** How do you plan to capitalize on this victory in Ramadi? Can you stabilize the city and prevent terrorists from finding another foothold?

**Gen. Alkenani:** I would like to express my appreciation for the honorable stand of tribal forces who fight alongside their brothers in the Armed Forces. I also would like to extend my gratitude to Ramadi residents who supported the Armed Forces either by providing valuable information on Daesh hideouts or by just warmly welcoming their sons who liberated the city. The joyful chants of Ramadi women who welcomed their sons in the Armed Forces has a positive impact on their morale. One of the fighters told me how the Ramadi citizens welcomed them with tears and smiles. After liberating the city, a battalion of tribal fighters, along with police, took the lead. They controlled the ground and

prevented sleeper cells from destabilizing the city. In addition, the local government resumed work to serve citizens. The security forces helped the displaced return to their homes. The city suffered massive destruction and needs massive efforts to rebuild. However, I am optimistic that the Iraqi government and local government will do their best to provide services and secure and stabilize it. The battle of Ramadi boosted the morale of our Armed Forces and makes Iraqis proud of their military. Daesh's goal was to demoralize the Iraqi military through their propaganda; however, after Ramadi, the terrorists lost the momentum and morale. Their fighters started fleeing the area before our arrival.

**Unipath:** When it comes to battling extremism, what are Iraq's strengths and weaknesses?

**Gen. Alkenani:** Our strength is the bravery and heroism of the Iraqi Armed Forces and the unity of Iraqis to fight terror. In addition, I recognize the commitment of our friends to provide security and military support for Iraq to defeat Daesh. We are facing a challenge to deprive Daesh of financing, recruits and arms, since these activities take place outside Iraq. The majority of this activity takes place in neighboring countries. We call on nations of the region to track and disrupt terrorist activities and punish those who carry them out. Daesh will not stop at the Iraqi border, but aims to disrupt the security and stability of the whole region and the globe. A good example is when they took control of Raqqa and launched a media campaign that threatened all nations in the region and described the heads of states as apostates and agents. Our ambition is to build security cooperation among neighboring nations to defeat terrorism that distorts the image of Islam and destroys the city of Muslims.

**Unipath:** How important is the larger coalition in defeating Daesh?

**Gen. Alkenani:** International cooperation is crucial to defeat Daesh, which is considered one of the most dangerous international terrorist organizations. It recruits fighters from the Caucasus, Europe, North America and Asia. This terrorist organization views the civilized world as its primary enemy. The recent terrorist attacks in Paris, North America and Turkey are good examples of the goals of these bloodthirsty terrorists. Therefore, all nations that want peace and freedom must stand up and battle this extremist ideology that slanders Muslims as apostates and non-Muslims as infidels with the aim of killing everyone. ♦

## SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

Do you have examples of successes or strategies to fight violent extremism in your country?

Share your stories and ideas by emailing *Unipath* at **CENTCOM.UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL**



COOPERATION

# EQUALS STRENGTH







Pakistan Navy Sailors keep guard near the PNS Zulfiqar after returning to Karachi. The Zulfiqar carried 22 crew members of an Egyptian merchant vessel that had been boarded by Somali pirates.

REUTERS

## SECURITY IS ENHANCED WHEN NATIONS SHARE INFORMATION AND COMBINE MILITARY MIGHT

UNIPATH STAFF

It's hard to find a success story as sudden as that of Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151), the multinational anti-piracy armada formed in Bahrain in 2009 to clear the seas of Somali piracy.

Just months after the combined naval forces began patrolling off the Horn of Africa, the scourge of dead sailors, looted cargo and multimillion-dollar ransoms began to diminish. By 2014, commanders of CTF 151 announced that Somali piracy had been reduced to near zero. Not a single ship was successfully hijacked.

Along with its partner task forces in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf — Combined Task Forces 150 and 152 — the anti-piracy coalition is a triumph of cooperative security. Militaries are only as effective as the partnerships they build, the information they share and the interoperability they enhance with friendly nations.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates all played roles in one or more of the task forces, along with partners from the United States, Europe and East Asia.

“No one nation alone can resolve this menace. Piracy is a shared challenge which can only be addressed through collaborative and comprehensive international efforts,” said Commodore Zahid Ilyas of the Pakistan Navy, who assumed command of CTF 151 in December 2015. “During my command, I shall continue to deter and disrupt piracy while maintaining a flexible approach in coordination.”

Cooperative security takes many shapes. It can be represented by multinational military operations such as those engaged in stabilizing Afghanistan. It can be peacekeeping missions abroad under the banner of



**A boarding team instructs the crew of a drug smuggling vessel to show their hands in the Gulf of Aden. It's part of Combined Task Force 151, a multinational task force established to conduct counterpiracy operations off the coast of Somalia.** GETTY IMAGES



the United Nations. And it need not always involve military action, as evidenced by international disaster relief operations and global agreements governing cyber security.

Peace and stability operations throughout the Middle East and Central Asia have attracted broad coalitions. For example, both Jordan and the United Arab Emirates have devoted years to helping Afghanistan emerge from decades of bloodshed and civil war.

Jordan has focused on providing engagement teams as part of a culturally sensitive humanitarian mission. Army imams and female engagement teams fanned out across the country.

As one of the Jordanian commanders, Col. Mohammad Al-Khraisha, said at the end of a six-month stint at Bagram Air Force Base: Jordan continues the Afghan mission because it believes that global peace and security can be achieved only through combined efforts and strong ties between nations.

The UAE dubbed its Afghanistan humanitarian mission Winds of Goodness. Its troops view their role as supporting social and economic development in underserved, remote communities in the Central Asian country. The construction of medical clinics, schools, mosques, roads and wells was central to the mission.

Another active coalition is Operation Inherent Resolve, the air campaign designed to weaken and dislodge Daesh terrorists from Syria and Iraq. Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have participated in some of the thousands of coalition air strikes in Syria. Jordanian pilots have flown similar missions in Syria and Iraq. Egypt has conducted strikes against Daesh targets in neighboring Libya.

Additionally, a Saudi-led coalition of nine Arab states has joined with Yemen to battle Houthi fighters threatening the peace and stability of that country. The coalition, which includes the UAE, Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait, is an example of the benefits derived from joining forces to protect the region from malevolent forces.

Farther from home, United Nations peacekeeping missions have enlisted thousands of Egyptian, Jordanian and Pakistani security forces. Countries such as Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Sudan have benefited from their generosity.

The recent flooding in the Middle East in late 2015 and early 2016 reaffirmed the need for flexible military forces able to assist in

natural disasters. Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Yemen all suffered from record-breaking rainfall, including storms produced by two rare Indian Ocean hurricanes that skirted the Arabian Peninsula.

Some of the lifesaving skills employed against the flooding were honed by helping Nepal recover from a deadly earthquake that struck the South Asian country in April 2015. Pakistan, for example, provided field hospitals and search and rescue teams to aid the stricken Nepalese. The UAE rushed medical supplies, food and tents to Nepal's homeless.

In the field of counternarcotics — a special concern for Central Asian nations used as smuggling routes for opium traffickers — cooperative security isn't optional but essential. Multinational training for border guards, counternarcotics officers and customs officials are a frequent occurrence in places such as Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Afghanistan.

Finally, cooperation has become a critical component of cyber security. U.S. Central Command's annual Central Region Communications Conference in Washington, D.C., is one such attempt to build a network of military-oriented cyber security professionals. The goal is to build resilience throughout the region against computer hackers trying to weaken national defenses and disrupt society.

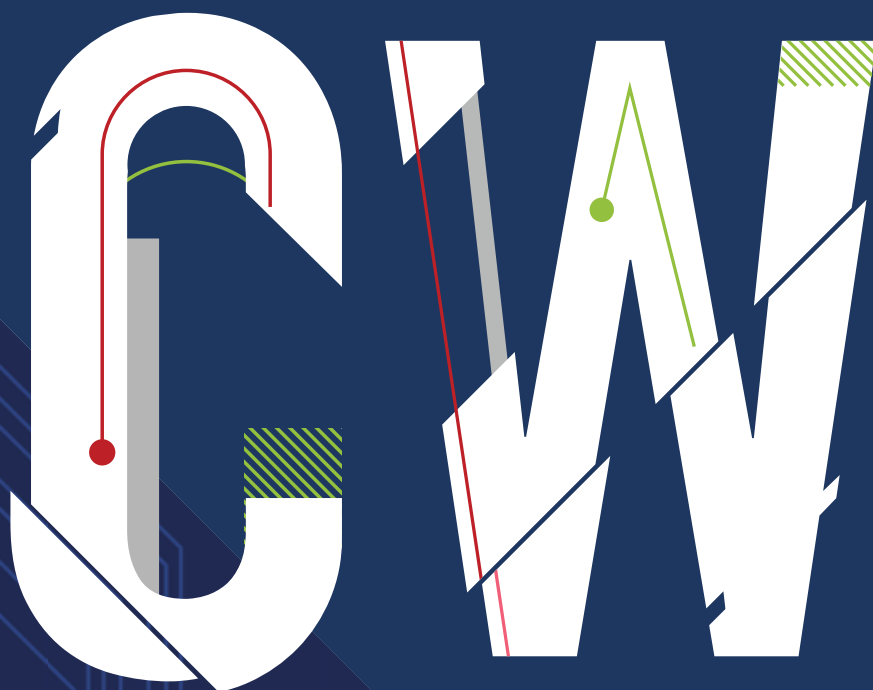
If militaries of the Middle East and South and Central Asia have learned one thing over the past few decades confronting regional challenges, it's that we're all stronger when we're working together. ♦

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

- Does your country participate in military partnerships, multilateral exercises and peacekeeping missions?
- How does the experience help build better Soldiers or improve national security?
- How are military partnerships and peacekeeping missions changing?

Unipath welcomes your ideas, articles, and photos at  
[CENCOM.UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL](mailto:CENCOM.UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL)





**CYBER  
WARFARE  
EMERGES  
AS KEY  
BATTLEGROUND**



## JORDAN'S BRIG. GEN. AHMAD MILHIM LEADS AN EFFORT TO PROTECT THE MILITARY, GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESSES FROM DIGITAL ATTACKS



UNIPATH STAFF

**T**he information technology revolution — and the emergence of new spaces for people to communicate and conduct their daily business — has changed the world profoundly. It's common for people to shop, deposit money in bank accounts and pay bills without leaving home. Doctors can conduct surgery with the aid of a computer network, and homeowners can monitor and control their home's temperature and lighting from anywhere in the world. While technology has delivered many great things to mankind, terrorists and other criminal groups are using it to rob banks, spread extremist ideologies and carry out deadly attacks. Therefore, it is essential for nations to beef up defensive technologies to counter these imminent threats. Jordan is one of the first nations in the region to establish a directorate for digital security. *Unipath* interviewed Brig. Gen. Ahmad Milhim, director of information security for Jordan, who explains the important role of this directorate.



# ALTHOUGH CYBERSPACE IS RELATIVELY NEW, IT IS CONSIDERED THE FOURTH FRONT ON THE BATTLEFIELD. BECAUSE MOST COMMUNICATION, INCLUDING THE GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM, TAKES PLACE IN CYBERSPACE, IT HAS BECOME A BATTLESPACE AS ESSENTIAL AS GROUND, SEA AND AIR.

**UNIPATH:** Tell us about your academic background.

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** I studied electrical engineering at Lawrence University in Michigan. I was sent by the Jordan Armed Forces and earned my bachelor's degree in 1986. Upon my return to Jordan, I worked in many sections within the Armed Forces. I went again to the United States for my higher education and earned a master's degree in computer science and engineering in 2001. That enabled me to make information technology my career in the military.

**UNIPATH:** Do you plan to build a secure network to defeat the external threats?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** The Directorate of Information Security is newly established in Jordan, starting in 2014. Our aim is to establish a secure network for Armed Forces and protect Jordan's cyberspace. It is part of my duty to build a strong network that is difficult to infiltrate, and we are working closely with our U.S. partners to meet this objective.

**UNIPATH:** What are the challenges to implementing your plan?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** There are many challenges, but no doubt the same challenges face other nations working on similar projects. These include human resources, funding and organization. It is important to find skilled and specialized individuals in this sector and to maintain and advance their ability to be current with new technologies and to learn from other nations hit by cyber attacks. Just as we obtain new and sophisticated technologies for sharpening our skills, so do our adversaries. This effort will need a solid budget to keep pace. In addition to the financial challenges, there is the organizational challenge of educating the Armed Forces staff to be vigilant

and understand the importance of cyber security.

This field is new to the Armed Forces, whether in Jordan or other nations. It became necessary to build an organization that is able to secure this new front. This effort requires laws and regulations in addition to the funding and manpower to enforce the policy. The organizational challenge is the first hurdle faced by nations attempting to build cyber security organizations. It requires in-depth research and studies and the right experts to establish the specialized departments and teams. The Jordan Armed Forces recognized this challenge early on and established a specialized directorate to monitor and build the capacity needed for cyber security and a secure Armed Forces network. I am confident that with the support of our partner in the U.S. government and U.S. Central Command, we will soon build the capacity of our organization.

**UNIPATH:** What are your thoughts on holding an international conference for cyber security and its role in combating organized crime and cyber terrorists?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** I believe these conferences are essential to building partners and networks and to strengthening the trust among friends in the field. In addition, we learned firsthand about the latest studies and exchanged ideas and benefited from the experiences of other nations. No doubt, building partnerships and trust is key to success in the cyber domain.

**UNIPATH:** Why is it important for the military to pursue a cyber-security strategy?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** Building the strategy is like setting the cornerstone for any organization. We state our objectives to assure and sustain success. We worked to build a strategy and have made tremendous progress toward our goals.

**UNIPATH:** Talk about the relationship between cyber security and information security in the daily lives of Soldiers.

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** An information operation is a military term and means protecting sensitive information from adversaries. In other words, to protect the secrecy of an operation. The term has been improvised for cyber technology, and is a concept essential not only for militaries but the private sector as well. The private sector is continuously securing its networks to prevent cyber attacks — cyberspace has a significant impact on business profitability. It became critical to protect this space, whether for the military or the private sector. Therefore cyber security became the front line for protecting the security of military information and operations as well as the security of Soldiers on the battlefield. As information security becomes the backbone of our military operations, it becomes essential that we educate Soldiers about the vital role they play in protecting information. Although cyberspace is relatively new, it is considered the fourth front on the battlefield. Because most communication, including the global positioning system, takes place in cyberspace, it has become a battlespace as essential as ground, sea and air. In addition, the common use of personal communication devices, including by Soldiers on the battlefield, poses a huge challenge for information security. We must educate our Soldiers to protect the Armed Forces' information security by enforcing cyber security regulations.

**UNIPATH:** How important is military cooperation with other security agencies and the private sector?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** There is no separate military and civilian cyberspace; there is only one shared cyberspace. All entities must cooperate to protect it. Cyberspace has no physical borders. There is a great deal of overlap between military and private sector networks and even among nations. This overlap means a small penetration of military or private sector networks can have an enormous impact on the military. It is therefore essential for all parties to cooperate and do whatever they can to assure the highest level of cyber security. Furthermore, it is important to provide educational programs and information sharing about current threats and to encourage everyone to report suspicious activities or cyber attacks. Jordan's Armed Forces enjoy a great relationship with the rest of the national agencies and the private sector, and this is a strength because it makes everyone well-informed.

**UNIPATH:** Tell us about your daily work and what you do as a military leader in the field?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** I am the director of security and protection of information security. My directorate is assigned many tasks. The most important is to update the necessary capacity, policies, technologies and manpower to defend the Armed Forces' cyberspace and leverage a secured working space. Before assuming my current

position as the first director to this directorate, I filled many positions that built my leadership skills, and I hope I meet my commanders' expectations. We are working closely with our partners in U.S Central Command to improve and obtain capabilities and technologies to ensure the security of our shared cyberspace. As I mentioned earlier, this is shared cyberspace and must be protected by all stakeholders. In addition, we are working with an open mind across the governmental and private sector to share expertise and information about threats and how to counter them.

**UNIPATH:** Why it is important for a nation to team up to maintain cyber security?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** Cyberspace is a shared space without borders, and it is the responsibility of all nations to secure it. When a personal computer is subverted, the rest of the network will be at risk and the threat spreads rapidly. Consequently, users must maintain high vigilance when browsing the Internet and reading emails and must report any suspicious activities to eliminate infections to the entire network. No nation can stop individuals from entering their cyberspace, which creates a great challenge in controlling it. In fact, a person or a small group of criminals or terrorists could cause grave damage to critical networks. We are seeing cooperation among organized crime groups across the world to coordinate massive attacks on a single target to infiltrate it. Such attacks cause severe damage to the financial and security sectors. If we don't establish international laws and rules to regulate cyberspace and punish the criminals who violate these laws, chaos, criminality and occasional loss of life will never end. It is essential for nations to share intelligence, tools and skills to defeat cyber security threats. I am not suggesting this cooperation will completely end all threats, but it can reduce them.

**UNIPATH:** How serious are the threats to cyberspace from terrorists and criminals, and what is Jordan doing to counter them?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** No one doubts that terrorist and criminal threats have become a daily reality. These threats are as different as their objectives. Unfortunately, all indications lead us to the conclusion that these threats have not only increased in frequency but sophistication. This adds to the burden on the state to ensure the protection of its citizens and infrastructure. And it requires a sequence of actions to eliminate the threats. In Jordan, we took many actions, including establishing the program to protect our cyberspace. Beginning in 2010 with His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein and His Excellency the Chief of Staff, we created the first national strategy to protect our cyberspace. The Armed Forces were assigned this task in 2016, which makes the Armed Forces the primary entity to improve national cyberspace security. Our goal is to establish an advanced program with the highest possible protection within five years.



# WINNING ON THE DIGITAL BATTLEFIELD

Countering terrorist propaganda and protecting computer networks from hackers are two sides of a larger strategy

UNIPATH STAFF



**W**inning the war on the digital battlefield is becoming a key objective in the fight against violent extremist organizations (VEOs). Across the Middle East and South and Central Asia, countries united against Daesh and other VEOs are countering malicious propaganda with new media tactics and devising strategies to protect government and civil institutions from devastating cyber attacks.

For all the evil of al-Qaida, Daesh, al-Shabab and other terror groups, they have been effective at deceiving recruits into believing they are on the side of those suffering from corruption, poverty and oppression. Although these terrorists have revealed their hypocrisy many times over, countering their narrative remains a challenge.

Shutting down or suspending the Facebook, Twitter or YouTube sites may seem like a logical reaction, but it doesn't offer a lasting solution. New accounts are easily established to spread the propaganda. Likewise, shutting down Internet access in disputed areas is also proving difficult. Small satellite dishes can be purchased to connect to the Web, even in government-controlled areas that try to limit access.

That makes counteracting terrorist propaganda a critical weapon in winning the information war. And progress is being made.

In Cairo, a United Arab Emirates proposal on the role of the media in promoting the values of tolerance and combating extremism was approved at a meeting of the Arab Information Ministers' Council at the General

Secretariat of the Arab League. The council emphasized the importance of Arab media organizations in spreading the culture of tolerance and fighting extremism as part of a holistic strategy that makes better use of traditional and modern media platforms.

It is also promoting dialogue and interaction among nations and other peoples by highlighting the values of the Arab-Islamic civilization, which denounce practices of fanaticism, extremism and terrorism.

Egypt's Al-Azhar University and the Dar Al-Ifta organization and its Marsad Al-Fatawa Department are monitoring, identifying and countering Daesh ideology. They share information about Daesh's murder of innocent civilians and the destruction of mosques and historical sites.

The UAE is also taking an active role. It joined with the United States in launching a Middle Eastern digital communications center focused on using social media to combat Daesh propaganda. The Sawab Center opened in July 2015 and is named for the Arabic word for "the right or proper way."

Its mission is to challenge Daesh propaganda and amplify moderate and tolerant voices from across the region. The center opened an online community that provides people of the region, and the world, an opportunity to launch and share content that punctures Daesh's grotesque propaganda.

Separately, the United States has expanded an existing U.S. State Department division established

in 2011 and known as the Global Engagement Center. Its responsibilities include countering extremist messages online and coordinating American counterterrorism messaging efforts. It is increasingly sharing stories of defectors and former radicals, highlighting Muslim victims of terrorism, and showcasing living conditions and battlefield realities in Daesh-held areas.

Technology experts across the region are also working to insulate critical institutions from the threat of computer hackers.

Cyber attacks have no boundaries. They threaten major government functions as well as private industry, commerce, health care, communications and personal information. Banking and electrical grids can be taken offline, bringing countries to a standstill.

That is why the work being performed at the Arab Regional Cyber Security Center, based in Oman, is so important. It organizes summits that connect public, private and academic sectors to formulate strategies and plans. This and other cyber conferences represent opportunities to build strong communication channels among countries in the region. Oman's National Computer Emergency Readiness Team was designated in 2012 to serve as the regional center for cyber security across the Arab region.

Similar success stories are being reported in Bahrain, Afghanistan and Qatar, where each is taking a proactive approach to protecting critical communication channels and information databases from hackers.

Bahrain formed the Cyber Crime Directorate several years ago, and the country has become part of the international effort to share its experiences with other nations in the region.

One of those, Afghanistan, formed its Computer Emergency Response Team in 2009 to track cyber security in the public and private sectors. Two years ago, the country adopted a National Cybersecurity Strategy to establish a safe and secure cyber environment.

Along those same lines, Qatar has conducted national cyber security drills to gauge its understanding of the threat and improve its responses. It studied how other countries drilled for cyber attacks and applied those lessons. Rather than force banks and other private institutions to participate, Qatar's cyber security division made the drills voluntary but highlighted the consequences of being unprepared for an attack.

The drill drew dozens of participants that shared information and learned about the effectiveness of acting cooperatively and systematically during an attack, whether it be on financial institutions, energy businesses or government agencies.

Collectively, the efforts of these nations and others have resulted in better monitoring and reporting and a closer cooperation with Internet and media companies. But in this digital age, the extremists can be expected to find new ways to get their message out. If nothing else, the experiences over the past several years have revealed the need to immediately challenge that propaganda wherever it is found and to protect our military, government and civil institutions from cyber intrusions.

Daesh's brutal methods and intolerant ideology have no place in modern societies and deviate from the teachings of all religious traditions. Reinforcing that message goes a long way toward slowing the recruitment of innocents who may be fooled by the false narrative of Daesh and other VEOs.

**UNIPATH:** Daesh has specialized groups conducting cyber attacks. Since Jordan is considered the front line against Daesh, are there any known attacks by Daesh against Jordan?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** I have no specific information about Daesh cyber attacks against Jordan, but I don't doubt it will attempt to attack our country. Thank God, so far, there has been no successful terrorist cyber attack. This proves that our men are vigilant and ready. We maintain a high level of readiness to defeat terrorists. I thank the international conference that provides a great deal of benefits to us, including war games with many scenarios for countering cyber offenses and recovering from them. We are preparing for exercises with our friends to simulate cyber attacks and the ways to deal with them.

**UNIPATH:** What can other nations learn from Jordan's experience in creating a cyber security strategy?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** Just as we benefited from the nations that established their programs before us, I am sure the other nations would benefit from our experience. Other nations' experiences, whether successful or not, offer great lessons. It is critical to learn from other nations, especially in such a sophisticated domain. Since 2010, we identified the priorities for our strategy. We experienced some delays in our program because of routine bureaucracy, and this is a very important lesson for any nation wanting to build a cyber security program. Most important is establishing an organization of national authority that owns the human resources and financial and legal aspects needed to implement a cyber strategy. When we created the strategy, I highly recommended we create a complementary authority to manage it. Otherwise, it is difficult to make any progress.

**UNIPATH:** What cyber security advice do you give to Soldiers using smartphones?

**BRIG. GEN. MILHIM:** We must work with the Soldiers, and we must implement a clear policy and explain the danger of using personal phones to talk about operations or take pictures of locations, equipment or objects related to ongoing operations. We must monitor violations. We must adhere to a strict policy on using these devices and clearly prohibit the sharing of information and images of operational value. We must have the technology to identify breaches and punish violators accordingly. ♦

## WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

- What are some of the best examples of whole-of-government approaches to cyber security?
- Do you have an example of a unique program or strategy for cyber security?
- What are some of the best innovations to counter terrorist propaganda online?

Share your ideas with us at [CENTCOM.UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL](mailto:CENTCOM.UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL)





# BUILDING PROFESSIONALISM

Training, education and partnerships are key to improving regional militaries

UNIPATH STAFF

The military exercise Raad al-Shamal, or Northern Thunder in Arabic, is a testament to Saudi Arabia's determination to defend its northern border separating the nation from terrorist-inspired conflicts in Iraq and Syria. In what was one of the largest displays of strength in the recent history of the Middle East, Raad al-Shamal brought together forces from Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and many other nations.



Special operations forces from Pakistan, Jordan, France and the U.S. take part in a boarding drill during exercise Eager Lion in Aqaba in May 2015. REUTERS



Several months later, in February 2016, the kingdom announced leadership of a coalition to combat violent extremism in the region, including the variant proclaimed by Daesh in Syria and Iraq.

“The joint training aims to support the capabilities of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the coalition countries to form a common Arab defense force and to unify our plans and combat current regional challenges,” Egyptian military spokesman Mohamed Samir told *Daily News Egypt*.

There are many components to the professionalism demanded of armed forces throughout the world. They include multinational partnerships, joint training, committed leadership and readiness. Nations of the Middle East and South and Central Asia are aligned in the fight against the extremist ideology and unspeakable brutality of Daesh. They are building professional armies and coordinating their responses to the threats posed by these terror groups.

These trained armies, along with the multinational cooperation among the various governments, civil institutions and militaries, are vital to rooting out the terror networks that threaten the peace and

skills. Eager Lion, an annual U.S. Central Command exercise hosted by Jordan, switches between bilateral and multilateral exercises. Kuwait proudly hosted CENTCOM-affiliated Exercise Eagle Resolve in 2015 and aims to do so again in 2017.

As they fly in the same formations, serve aboard the same boats, pitch their tents on the same patches of sand and storm the same buildings, multinational troops are not just sharing knowledge but building camaraderie.

“The exercise is important because of what the region and the world are experiencing from the rise of extremist groups that are far away from the humanitarian values and that are committing horrible crimes,” Brig. Gen. Fahad Faleh Ahmad Al Damen, director of Jordan’s Joint Training Directorate, said at Eager Lion 2015. “This mandates having joint cooperation and the exchange of expertise in order to fight all aspects and types of terrorism.”

Many of the nations participating in the Eager Lion war games are also members of the bombing coalition against Daesh known as Operation Inherent Resolve. Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have conducted air attacks as part of the operation. Others, such as Qatar, are providing vital counter air sorties.

In Afghanistan, the Afghan National Security Force is over 300,000 strong and is leading the country’s security efforts. Internally, anti-corruption efforts there aim to restore stability to the government.

The NATO-led Resolute Support Mission, launched in January 2015, provides training, advice and assistance for the Afghan security forces and institutions. About 12,000 personnel from NATO and partner nations contribute to the mission, which supports planning, programming and budgeting; assures transparency, accountability and oversight; and supports the rule of law and good governance.

Soldiers in the region are not just better trained, they’re better educated. Bolstering the coordinated military effort is an infusion of professional Soldiers graduating from Middle Eastern military academies. At the Egyptian Military Academy in Cairo, students from Egypt as well as Soldiers from Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia receive training in modern weapons, martial arts and the latest combat tactics.

In Jordan, religious instruction for the Jordan Armed Forces preaches a properly reverent image of Islam to inoculate Soldiers against the ideological corruption of Daesh. Amir al-Hasan College for Religious Science near Amman is leading the way in this unique form of training that focuses on minds as much as bodies. Terrorists have used religion as a weapon to deceive young people, manipulating and

*“The exercise is important because of what the region and the world are experiencing from the rise of extremist groups that are far away from the humanitarian values and that are committing horrible crimes. This mandates having joint cooperation and the exchange of expertise in order to fight all aspects and types of terrorism.”*

— Brig. Gen. Fahad Faleh Ahmad Al Damen, director of Jordan’s Joint Training Directorate, speaking at Eager Lion 2015

security of every nation in the region and beyond. So, too, are anti-corruption efforts that strengthen the governmental institutions behind the troops.

The training and coordination are helping to reverse the gains made by Daesh and have disrupted the access to money and fuel the terrorists’ need to wage their evil campaigns. Additionally, robust efforts are under way in a number of nations to counter the emerging threat of cyber attacks and the online terror propaganda used to draw recruits and spread fear.

Raad al-Shamal isn’t the only exercise to make its mark in the region. Each year, countries conduct dozens of bilateral and multilateral military exercises, all meant to build interoperability and boost



Afghan Air Force MD-530F Cayuse Warrior pilots and their advisors from the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission land in Kabul.

STAFF SGT. PERRY ASTON/U.S. AIR FORCE

twisting passages from holy texts for recruitment purposes.

“The most effective tool to combat this wrongful ideology is by showing true Islam,” Brig. Gen. Dr. Majid Salim Al-Drawsha, director of academic study, Emir Hasan college of Islamic Study, told *Unipath*. “For youth, there are lectures and seminars to show them the true face of those criminals and where they came from, to protect young Muslims from being deceived.”

These nonsectarian, professional forces are fighting for the security and freedom of their countries and allies, and against an extreme ideology rooted in hatred toward others.

Military preparedness, national military academies, multinational exercises, regional interoperability, civil-military cooperation, anti-corruption measures and good governance initiatives are all important vehicles to counter terrorism and anti-sectarian policies adopted by malevolent forces in countries across the Middle East.

By enhancing the military and civil capabilities through training and shared knowledge, the prospect for lasting peace is greater. ♦

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

- Is there a military academy or training program in your country that you would like highlighted in *Unipath*?
- What are some of the best international military professional development programs (conferences, seminars and schools) you have taken part in?

Unipath welcomes your input so that we can share the best-of-the-best educational and training opportunities for professional forces. Email us at **CENTCOM.UNIPATH@MAIL.MIL**





## SENIOR LEADER PROFILE



# A FORCE AGAINST TERROR

JORDANIAN BRIG. GEN. ADNAN AL-ABBADI URGES  
GLOBAL SPECIAL FORCES TO UNITE TO DEFEAT EXTREMISM

UNIPATH STAFF

**E**nforcing security and stability and controlling international borders in unstable regions are never achieved by luck. Jordan's location places it on the front lines in the war against Daesh, an enemy that has no principles and shows no remorse for shedding innocent blood.

The role of leaders is essential to maintaining the high morale, loyalty and tenacity of troops. So when Jordan needed a commander to lead its elite forces, it demanded a man with nerves of steel and strategic foresight. That man is Brig. Gen. Adnan Al-Abbadi of the Joint Special Operations Command.

Gen. Adnan began his military career in 1983 and scaled the leadership ladder, serving as an officer in Jordan's 71st Counter Terrorism Battalion, considered one of the nation's most advanced units. He graduated

with honors from Jordan's War College.

After being deployed to command the first Jordanian special operations unit in Afghanistan and staying there for seven months, he attended the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. That advanced training helped him ascend to command the 71st Battalion.

Gen. Adnan considers himself blessed that His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein is not only Jordan's civilian leader but one of the nation's leading military figures.

"My military idol is His Majesty King Abdullah II. He was the commander of Jordanian special operation forces from 1996 to 1999, when I served as an officer in the 71st Battalion. Before that, I was an intelligence officer in the 101st Special Forces Group, and we were in constant

communications with His Majesty, as he was our commander,” the general said.

“His Majesty has a sharp military mind, and we learned patience, tolerance and humility from him. He inspired us to adopt his leadership values. We are honored that His Majesty left his position as special forces commander to become king of Jordan.”

King Abdullah has retained a place in his heart for special forces, personally overseeing the progress these elite troops are making in the field. Gen. Adnan and his colleagues are gratified by the attention they receive.

“Since I became the commander of special operations in July 2015, I have been blessed with four visits by the king,” he said. “These visits boost our morale and make us proud. He personally discusses security challenges in the region, reviews our plans and exchanges ideas.”

Gen. Adnan believes that defeating terrorists requires multiple efforts that transcend special forces, encompassing conventional military units, the civilian security sector, allied forces and society at large.

He believes it is the duty of every Muslim nation to develop plans to counter extremist ideology, clarifying the true nature of Islam to deprive Daesh of recruits misled by its lies.

“We are not working on the military objectives only; we are working on social media to educate the youth and counter extremism through a national plan,” he said. “Modern war no longer uses only conventional forces and weapons. This is a new kind of war that deals with ideology. There is a race between good and evil to win the hearts of the populace.”

This new kind of war also requires international partnerships united against terrorism, the general said. His dream is to create a global network of special operations troops that share the same doctrine and training. They would operate together not just during training exercises but on the battlefield as well. Key to that effort is a system of information sharing.

“As we all know, terrorist organizations across the world share ideology and enjoy cooperation and support among themselves. When evil unites, good must unite to defeat it. Our goal is to bind all efforts of the world’s special operations forces to work in the same direction to set back terrorism,” Gen. Adnan said.

The most pressing concern of Jordanian forces is guarding the kingdom, particularly the volatile northern border it shares with Syria. The general quoted King Abdullah’s concern about the need for special forces to play both a strategic and tactical role in areas favored by terrorists.

“I have units stationed there and work daily with border forces. We help our brothers, the Syrian refugees, as they cross the border and head toward the refugee camps. At the same time we act as a rapid response force and engage the smugglers and drug traffickers who attempt to cross our borders,” the general said.

“We also have an emergency unit ready to deploy, whether it’s defending the integrity of the kingdom or deploying anywhere in the world where our leadership identifies a target that’s essential for our security and interests.”

**Brig. Gen. Adnan Al-Abbadi presents Jordanian jump wings to a Saudi Soldier after the friendship jump at the Eager Lion 2015 military exercise.**

MAJ. TIFFANY M. COLLINS/  
U.S. ARMY







## AROUND THE REGION



Turkish honor guards carry flag-draped coffins of car-bombing victims during a funeral ceremony in Ankara. REUTERS

# Turkmenistan Condemns Terror Attacks

UNIPATH STAFF

Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow expressed condolences to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan over a terrorist attack in February 2016. Terrorists killed and wounded dozens of people in Ankara. Subsequent attacks in Turkey have killed dozens more. In his note, Berdimuhamedow expressed sympathy and support for the families, relatives and friends of the victims and wished a speedy recovery to the injured. He expressed similar sentiments in the aftermath of a bombing in Turkey in October 2015. The Turkmen government has said the country opposes terrorism and extremism and fully supports international efforts to eradicate this evil. Source: Trend News Agency



Turkmenistan President  
Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



# Egypt Promotes Regional Security

UNIPATH STAFF

Egyptian Interior Minister Magdy Abdel-Ghaffar met with U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director John Brennan in January 2016 to reinforce the importance of information sharing in counterterrorism.

Abdel-Ghaffar said fighting terrorist attacks requires international collaboration, and he praised the cooperation with the CIA in exchanging information and sharing experiences.

In his meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Brennan praised the strategic partnership and said Egypt is integral to achieving security in the Middle East. He added that Egypt is an important partner at the bilateral, regional and international levels. Brennan expressed interest in cooperating with Egypt on regional issues of common concern, the foremost being the fight against terrorists in the Middle East.

President al-Sisi said Egypt encourages cooperation with the U.S., not only in the security sector but in other fields. The approach should include military operations and security cooperation, as well as economic and social aspects, he said.

As examples, he cited Egypt's efforts to combat terrorism in limited areas in North Sinai as well as securing its border with Libya. In the same meeting, al-Sisi stressed that Egypt supports efforts to settle crises in a number of countries by reaching political solutions and safeguarding their entities, institutions and people. Source: Daily News Egypt



**President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said Egypt encourages cooperation with the U.S.** THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

# TAJIK WOMAN SENTENCED FOR DAESH SUPPORT

RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

**A** Tajik woman has been sentenced to prison for joining Daesh and calling on Tajik youth to join "jihad" in Syria.

A district court in Dushanbe in February 2016 found Zarina Sardorova guilty of "training, financing, and materially supporting mercenaries taking part in military conflicts" and the "organization of activities of a banned group."

The court sentenced Sardorova to 13 years in prison, making her the first woman in Tajikistan to be sentenced for involvement with Daesh. Investigators say the mother of two set up a social media account using a false name. She was accused of using the page, which featured a picture of her brandishing an AK-47 assault rifle, to call on young Tajiks to join "jihad" in Syria and Iraq.

In early 2015, Sardorova traveled to Syria via Turkey, where she married an unidentified man. It was her third marriage. According to the Interior Ministry, one of Sardorova's previous spouses was an active member of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, which was branded a terrorist organization and banned in 2015.

Tajik authorities arrested Sardorova at Dushanbe's airport as she arrived on a flight from Turkey.

Sardorova's sentencing took place two days after 14 men in the country's Yovon district were detained for questioning after they "liked" an Islamic extremist video posted on the same social media site used by Sardorova.

The men were questioned as part of an investigation into the video, which called on Tajik men and women to join Daesh. Tajik authorities say at least 1,000 Tajik citizens have traveled to Iraq and Syria to fight alongside Daesh terrorists.

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# Pakistan Foils Al-Qaida Jailbreak

REUTERS

Pakistani forces arrested 97 al-Qaida and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) militants in the southern city of Karachi in February 2016 and foiled a plan to break out of jail the killer of U.S. journalist Daniel Pearl.

The men are accused of involvement in major attacks on two Pakistani air bases, the Karachi airport, intelligence headquarters, and on police installations between 2009 and 2015.

The LeJ's Naeem Bokhari and Sabir Khan, as well as Farooq Bhatti, deputy chief of al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), were captured by Pakistani forces, military spokesman Lt. Gen. Asim Bajwa said. "Our conclusion is that all of the terrorist groups are trying to cooperate with each other in order to carry out terrorist attacks," he said.

The LeJ and AQIS had been working with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, also known as the Pakistani Taliban, Bajwa added. LeJ's sectarian ideology is closely aligned with Daesh's and supports

killing or expelling Pakistan's minority Shiites and establishing a Sunni theocracy.

Several of those arrested, including Bokhari, were in the advanced stages of planning a jailbreak on the Hyderabad Central Jail, Bajwa said. Khalid Omar Sheikh, who kidnapped and killed *The Wall Street Journal's* Daniel Pearl in 2002, is being held at that jail and was to be released during the raid, he said.

Six suicide bombers had been enlisted, in addition to 19 involved in facilitating it, Bajwa said. More than 700 pounds of explosives were recovered from a building believed to be a hideout.

The attackers planned to raid the prison compound with two vans filled with explosives, and had a list of about 35 prisoners they planned to kill, Bajwa said, displaying pencil sketches of the prison allegedly made by the militants. They had a separate list of about 100 prisoners, including Sheikh, whom they were supposed to release, he added.

**Officials say the Pakistani Taliban, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and the local al-Qaida branch plotted to break out 100 prisoners from the central jail in Hyderabad, Pakistan.** REUTERS





# Building Security by Pulling Together as One

UNIPATH STAFF

Leaders in the United Arab Emirates used the fourth annual World Government Summit in February 2016 to stress the importance of an “integrated doctrine” in upholding regional security.

His Highness Lt. Gen. Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, deputy prime minister and minister of the interior, highlighted the need for unity, teamwork and cooperation between governments and their people.

Integrated doctrine means people and governments working toward a single goal, like different body parts working together to perform physical activities, he said.

“The integrated doctrine is the main factor in foreseeing the future and being prepared for it,” Lt. Gen. Sheikh Saif said at the summit in Dubai, adding that the UAE reflects an integrated doctrine in every aspect, be it social, economic or political.



His Highness Lt. Gen. Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Using the analogy of teams of firefighters successfully suppressing a blaze at a hotel, the general drew parallels with the conflict in Yemen. “If we didn’t interfere, the fire would have spread to neighboring buildings, and with Yemen, if we hadn’t interfered, then the fire would have also spread to other neighboring countries and to our homes,” he said.

The World Government Summit is the largest of its kind in the world. Each year government officials, thought leaders, thinkers, policy makers and private sector leaders meet to discuss the best ways to develop the future of government, based on the latest developments and trends in government.

Sources: Gulf News, [worldgovernmentssummit.org](http://worldgovernmentssummit.org)

## KUWAITI GENERAL CALLS FOR GLOBAL FIGHT ON TERROR

UNIPATH STAFF

At a meeting of 29 nations committed to fighting terror, Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Mohammad Khaled Al-Khuder called for a redoubling of efforts to eliminate terrorist organizations.

“We should intensify efforts with other countries to tackle terrorism practiced by those organizations which threaten the security and stability of all nations,” he said at the eighth meeting of members of the coalition against Daesh, held at Seif Palace in February 2016.

Al-Khuder said terrorist organizations do not

reflect Islam’s real teachings and virtues. He urged members to exchange views and move forward in the fight against terrorism in all its forms.

His Highness Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah lauded the efforts by coalition members fighting terrorism and preserving peace and security.

The meeting was attended by U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Francis Dunford, among others. Dunford praised Kuwait’s role and the efforts exerted by the coalition.

Source: Arab Times





## LEBANON ASKS WORLD BANK FOR HELP COPING WITH REFUGEES

UNIPATH STAFF

Grants and low-interest loans from the World Bank would help Lebanon cope with the more than 1 million Syrian refugees now in the country, Lebanese Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil said.

At a meeting in March 2016 with a visiting World Bank delegation, Khalil said the grant money could help with the immediate needs of the refugees, while the loans could be used to finance infrastructure improvements. Additionally, the World Bank could help Lebanon ease its public debt service by covering the interest on its Eurobonds.

“This visit was an important opportunity to take a closer look at the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and to assess the means by which Lebanon could be supported,” Khalil said. “We have briefed our visitors on the challenges that Lebanon undergoes at this level and on the size of support that Lebanon needs to prop up the different sectors.”

He said he hoped the meeting would result in meaningful support but emphasized that the overall financial situation in Lebanon is stable. “All the facts confirm that we are capable of remaining steadfast amid the prevailing circumstances,” he said. Source: Lebanese Ministry of Information

**Syrian refugee children listen to a teacher inside a makeshift school in the eastern town of Kab Elias, Lebanon. Syrian teachers who are refugees volunteer their time.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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## Queen of Jordan Confronts Daesh

UNIPATH STAFF

**H**er Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan called on the world to unite against the scourge of Daesh.

"I think to confront them, we have to identify the enemy, and the enemies are the extremists, they are the collective enemy," the queen said. "But that's not what they want us to think. They want to pit the West against Islam, and Muslims against the rest of the world because for them, the more the world is divided, the more there's a chasm and a distance between us, the more space they have to maneuver and the more ground they gain."

Destroying such terrorists will require a collective effort, the queen said.

"I think we need to redraw the battle lines and understand that this is a battle amongst all of us: Christians, Muslims and Jews against the extremists — all of us moderates who are fighting for our way of life and our values against a group of people," she said.

The battle can't be won with weapons alone, she said. In addition to military action, Queen Rania called for an ideological campaign.

"Although we need to confront them very aggressively, militarily in the battlefield, this is also an ideological war and you can't kill an idea with a bullet — the only way you can kill an idea is to propose a better one."

She also reiterated the importance of education to suppress recruitment among the young.

"These groups, they exploit hopelessness; they live off desperation and division, and we can't give them that."

Source: Fox Business News

## REDUCING TERRORISM BY REDUCING ETHNIC DISCONTENT

UNIPATH STAFF

**T**he Kyrgyz Republic's National Strategic Studies Institute is cooperating with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to devise ways to lessen the appeal of extremism among the nation's ethnic minorities.

Institute Director Talant Sultanov and the OSCE Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities discussed ways to reduce radicalization. An OSCE delegation outlined a program to support ethnic minorities, including multilingual education at 56 schools.

Creating a forum of Central Asian counties to combat violent extremism was discussed, and Kyrgyz and OSCE officials agreed to broaden their cooperation.

Source: Bishkek AKIpress

## U.S. TO CONTINUE SECURITY COOPERATION WITH UZBEKISTAN

UNIPATH STAFF

**B**olstering the relationship between Uzbekistan and NATO was the subject of a meeting in February 2016 between senior officials with the government and the alliance.

Uzbek Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov and Minister of Defense Kabul Berdiev met with Rosaria Puglisi, NATO's liaison officer for Central Asia. They discussed ways to enhance cooperation.

The meeting occurred days after Pamela Spratlen, the U.S. ambassador to Uzbekistan, stressed the importance of stability and prosperity in Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states during a press conference in Tashkent.

Uzbekistan's proximity to Afghanistan and geographic position in the region make it a major partner in ensuring stability and safety for the entire Central Asian region, the ambassador said. Spratlen emphasized that the United States will continue cooperating with Uzbekistan as long as necessary.

Sources: AKIpress, NATO





## Combined Maritime Forces Commanders Meet

STORY AND PHOTO BY COMBINED MARITIME FORCES

Maintaining the free flow of commerce through the strategically important choke points of the Bab el Mandeb Strait, the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal is critically important, according to U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Kevin Donegan, commander of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

Donegan spoke at the CMF Commander's Conference in Bahrain in February 2016. The biannual conference brings together senior military representatives from CMF member states to update them on achievements, assess operational effectiveness, and discuss ways to improve and develop CMF capabilities.

In his opening remarks, Donegan highlighted the unique nature of the coalition and the complexities of the operating area. Though terrorism at sea is rare, terrorist groups have announced intentions to carry out such acts and have demonstrated an ability to do so, the admiral said. He praised the CMF and its partners in the European Union Naval Force and NATO for suppressing Somali piracy but warned the threat remains.

At the conference, Iraq enrolled as a full CMF member. The CMF consists of three Combined Task Forces whose patrols cover the Arabian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

## Emir Meets European Delegation

UNIPATH STAFF

Qatar was the focus of a European Union mission designed to improve regional security in light of the wars in Syria and Yemen.

A visiting delegation from the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee met in February 2016 with the Qatari emir, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, speaker of the Advisory Council. The delegation was accompanied by EU Ambassador Adam Kulach.

During meetings with Qatari officials, the delegation discussed security in the region, particularly in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Egypt. Participants emphasized the need for further diplomatic dialogue between the EU and Qatar regarding the shared commitment to peace and stability in the region.

The EU delegation said it considers Qatar an important partner that is contributing to peace and stability in the Middle East and North Africa.

The EU expressed its commitment toward finding a solution to the Syrian crisis. The first step is a diplomatic approach and the search for a political and peaceful long-term solution within the series of international involvements, such as the international support group for Syria. *Source: The Peninsula*



**His Highness Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar met with European Union officials to discuss security in the region.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



## SAUDI KING: ISLAM A RELIGION OF COMPASSION

UNIPATH STAFF

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud says Islam is a religion of justice and moderation that is being perverted by violent extremist organizations.

“The terrorism by those who claim they are Muslims is not in any way or form related to Islam,” he said. “Islam is a religion of compassion and cooperation, and we all have a great role in unifying our words and ranks while enlightening the nation. We need to be optimistic despite the conditions surrounding us.”

The Saudi monarch was attending Al-Janadriyah 30, the national heritage and culture festival named after the village on the northern outskirts of Riyadh, where it is held annually to celebrate symbols of the Saudi identity.

King Salman said cooperation and determination will help defeat the terrorists.

“Thank God, there are no crises or disturbances in Saudi Arabia, and I do stress that the security of the kingdom is the security of the pilgrims and visitors,” he said.

He stressed the importance of unity and respect among nations. “I reiterate once again that we protect the lands of Muslims and that we cooperate with our Arab and Muslim brothers on defending their countries, securing their independence and preserving the political regimes selected by their own people.”

Germany was the guest of honor for the festival, held in February 2016. Sources: Gulf News, Arab News



**The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia says Islam is a religion of justice, moderation and compassion.** THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## BAHRAIN CONDEMNS TERROR ATTACK

UNIPATH STAFF

Bahrain condemned a terrorist attack in Al-Arish in North Sinai in Egypt that resulted in the killing and wounding of policemen in January 2016.

In the wake of the attack, the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its solidarity with Egypt in fighting against violence, terrorism and extremism, and in taking the decisive action necessary to restore security and stability.

The Bahraini Foreign Ministry also expressed condolences and sympathies to the families and relatives of the martyrs. The Foreign Ministry renewed its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and called for consolidating international efforts to root out terrorism.

Along those lines, Bahrain and Pakistan have vowed to continue their cooperation against extremists.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Bahraini counterpart, Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman al Khalifa, met in January 2016 to discuss the cooperation between the two countries in defense and security. They agreed the partnership is essential to thwarting the threat of terrorism and violence.

Sources: The Associated Press, Bahrain News Agency, the Express Tribune with the International New York Times





# Iraq Seeks to Take Daesh Offline

REUTERS

Iraq is trying to persuade satellite firms to halt Internet service in areas under Daesh rule, seeking to deal a major blow to the group's potent propaganda machine, which relies heavily on social media to inspire followers.

Social media apps such as Twitter and Telegram are scrambling to limit Daesh's cyber activities. So far, that has proven to be a cat-and-mouse game, with the group re-emerging through other accounts with videos showing beheadings and extolling the virtues of living in a supposed caliphate.

Mobile networks are largely inoperable in the Daesh-held swaths of Iraq, areas which also have little fixed-line broadband infrastructure. Terrorists instead use satellite dishes to connect to the Web or illicit microwave dishes that hook them into broadband networks in government-held areas, three telecoms industry sources told Reuters.

There are many challenges for the Iraqi authorities: Within the satellite Internet industry, no one assumes responsibility for identifying and vetting end users; the territory under Daesh control often shifts; and a complex web of middlemen makes it tough to pinpoint who is selling militants internet capacity.

To connect to the web via a satellite requires a V-sat terminal — a small dish receiver and a modem — and an internet subscription.

Daesh uses "the V-sat system to access the internet in areas it controls," an Iraqi Communications Ministry official told Reuters. "What's still difficult for us is controlling V-sat receivers which connect directly to satellites providing internet services that cover Iraq."

In the Daesh-held northern city of Mosul, V-sat units can be bought for about \$2,000 to \$3,000 at a sprawling electronics market near the university. The official said Iraq was in talks with satellite companies covering Iraq to halt internet services to Daesh-controlled areas, adding that he had received positive signals from them, but that "the process is complicated."

Highlighting the complicated task, Reuters traced an

IP address of a Daesh militant in Raqqa, the group's de facto capital in Syria, which showed he was accessing the internet using YahClick, the consumer broadband brand of Abu Dhabi state-owned Yahsat, both a satellite owner and provider of end-user connectivity.

Yahsat would not directly comment on whether Daesh had used its services but said it complied with all laws and regulations and is cooperating with the ministry's request. It has no official presence in Syria.

The company, among the biggest providers of satellite internet in Iraq, relies on local agents to sell YahClick; three are listed on its website for Iraq, but other companies also sell the brand there.

Satellite owners such as Britain's Avanti, France's Eutelsat and Yahsat cover most of the Middle East. These sell capacity to other companies, such as Abu Dhabi's Wafa Technical Systems and Britain's Bentley Walker, which then use this capacity to sell services and equipment to businesses and consumers. Like Yahsat, these firms rely on in-country partners to distribute and sell their products.

V-sat units are potentially portable, transmit their location and should be traceable. But no one in the industry seems willing to take on the responsibility to vet users. Wafa and rival Bentley Walker, who buy satellite capacity and sell V-sat units, say they are unaware of who is ultimately using their services.

Wafa, which has about 2,500 V-sat units in Iraq, said in online advertisements it could deliver to any Iraqi city, including Mosul. "The resellers are the people who know the clients and where the end users are located," said Kamal Arjundas, assistant director at the company.

Even if Iraq cuts off Daesh from satellite internet, the group can remain online through illegal networks set up by businessmen. These entrepreneurs buy data capacity from fixed broadband providers, passing through many middlemen first. They connect this to microwave dishes, which have a range of about 40 km to eventually reach end users in Daesh-controlled areas.





## Aziz Calls for Road Map to Peace Talks with Taliban

TOLONEWS

Pakistan Prime Minister's Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz opened a meeting of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) in Islamabad by saying a clear road map is needed for the peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

He also said political reconciliation is the most practical option for promoting long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan.

"A clear and well-defined road map for peace talks between the government of Afghanistan and Taliban is of crucial importance," Aziz said. "It should identify and stipulate various stages of the process while measuring the progress made at each stage."

He added that the people of Afghanistan have been suffering from an unending cycle of violence for decades. "They need lasting peace and stability," he said. "The road map must also serve to convey positive signals about the unflinching commitment of parties to the peace process," he added.

He called on all QCG countries to persuade Taliban groups to join the talks.

"I am hopeful that continuing in this spirit and resolve, the group will now focus on identifying a way forward for holding direct peace talks between the government of Afghanistan and Taliban as early as possible."



**Afghanistan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai, right, shakes hands with Sartaj Aziz, advisor to the Pakistani prime minister on foreign affairs, before a January 2016 meeting in Islamabad of delegates from Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the United States to discuss peace talks.**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## OMAN, UAE FOIL DRUG SMUGGLING ATTEMPT

UNIPATH STAFF

**A**n attempt to smuggle drugs into Khasab, Oman, in February 2016 was thwarted by authorities who seized 10 kilograms of hashish, 19,800 narcotic pills and 54.5 grams of heroin, according to Col. Saeed Abdullah Tawir Al Suwaidi, director general of the Anti-Narcotics Federal Directorate General at the Ministry of Interior.

Drug smuggling threatens the security of Oman because the illicit proceeds can be used to fuel terror organizations and other criminal groups.

After foiling the smuggling effort, a delegation from the Anti-Narcotics Federal Directorate General visited the Musandam Governorate Police in Oman and met with Commander in Chief Brigadier Yasser Al Maamari.

They discussed ways to bolster their partnership and exchanged information on the fight against drug trafficking between the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

The partnership has interrupted several attempts to smuggle drugs between the countries.

Source: Emirates News Agency-WAM

## KAZAKHSTAN TO RECEIVE PATROL BOATS FROM AZERBAIJAN

UNIPATH STAFF

**A**zerbaijan will build patrol boats for the Border Service of Kazakhstan, Trend News Agency reports.

Azerbaijan Prime Minister Artur Rasizade met in Baku in February 2016 with Col. Darkhan Aytkalieovich Dilmanov, head of Kazakhstan's Frontier Guard.

They focused on strengthening cooperation, particularly with border protection, and on ways to combat illegal migration and smuggling across the Caspian Sea. Central Asian countries are among the routes used by opium producers from Afghanistan.

Stopping the flow of drugs and illegal migration is important to the region's security.

Azerbaijan says it plans to repair helicopters and ships in addition to building the patrol boats.

Source: Trend News Agency



# SHARING KNOWLEDGE

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