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Sino-Russian Convergence in the Military Domain

Eric Jacobson

SINCE THE 2014 UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION AND RUSSIA'S MUCH-HYPED "PIVOT EAST," scholars have paid greater attention to Sino-Russian relations, with camps developing around the question of whether the partnership is a genuine realignment or simply a marriage of convenience. However, military elements of this convergence were set in motion long before both the current crisis in NATO-Russian relations as well as the 2001 Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship. This article argues that Russia and China both see the United States as their main competitor and are developing similar strategies to secure political objectives that fall below the threshold for U.S. and allied conventional responses.

The swift victory of U.S. forces in the 1991 Desert Storm campaign, the 1999 NATO intervention in Yugoslavia, as well as the 1995 Taiwan Strait Crisis forced military planners in Russia and China to devise new methods to secure their political objectives if conflict with the United States erupted. Russian and Chinese officials saw these U.S. actions as proof that the United States remained a belligerent actor that must be deterred from intervening in the internal affairs of Russia and China. In addition, the

early 2000s rise in oil and energy prices and the growth of the Chinese economy allowed for increased investments in the militaries of Russia and China, respectively. With the requisite resources, both countries set out to update their military capabilities and approaches to conflict.

Current Russian Thinking

Current Russian military theory remains consistent with Soviet thinking, with major themes of forecasting, correlation of forces, and forms and methods of actions.¹ Although some Western analysts seized on an article written by General Staff Chief Valery Gerasimov² and the notion that Russia was developing a so-called "Gerasimov Doctrine" of hybrid warfare³, an important pillar of Russian doctrine is to eschew overarching models of warfare.⁴ In fact, militaries throughout history have used information campaigns in combination with conventional methods of warfare. According to Timothy Thomas, instead of broad models of warfare, Russia sets out a strategy based on the unique circumstances of individual scenarios, placing particular emphasis on the initial period of war (IPW). If the aggressor gains a large enough advantage during the initial period of war, it can lead to decisive

effects on the outcome of the conflict.⁵ This is especially prescient if available technology advantages the offense over the defense, and Russian theorists believe that the information and cyber domains provide such an advantage.⁶

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Russian operations emphasize this approach to the IPW by calling for quick and decisive action that creates new facts on the ground, but which optimally falls below the threshold for an allied response. In the 2008 Russo-Georgian war, Russian forces defeated Georgian forces before the United States and its allies had time to adequately react.⁷ The United States sailed Coast Guard and other vessels into

the Black Sea to signal its intention to deter Russian aggression, but only after Russian forces had already secured key objectives in Georgia.⁸ Later in the 2014 Crimea operation, Russia utilized deniable special operation forces that gradually ramped up into a complete seizure of the peninsula. In Crimea, a quick operation created new facts on the ground. This allowed Russia to alter the strategic correlation of forces by changing European borders via force, without suffering a major conflict with the West. Russia's speedy operation stood in stark contrast to the more deliberative decisionmaking process of the U.S. alliance system. By the time the United States had begun to formulate a counterstrategy, Russia was already in full control of Crimea. Russia's calculus was likely that the appropriate allied response would be a point of discord between the United States and NATO, one that would delay decisionmaking long enough to render the cost of escalation unbearable, and would force the United States to acquiesce to Russian gains.⁹

Current Chinese Thinking

Chinese military thinking retains the same overall strategic vision that was put in place by Mao Zedong. China refers to this posture as “active defense,” and argues that “We will not attack unless we are attacked, but we will surely counterattack if attacked.”¹⁰ While China sees this posture as strategically defensive, it allows for offensive operations and actions if they secure overall defensive objectives. For instance, aggressive attacks against U.S. forces in the South China Sea, or against Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) installations in South Korea, would be justified because they fulfil the overall defensive objective of keeping outside powers from threatening China.

While retaining an overall strategy of “active defense,” Chinese thinking is

undergoing an evolution informed by Russia's experiences, and is putting greater emphasis on seizing the initiative in conflict. Chinese military thinking has characterized seizing the initiative as the "single most decisive factor in controlling and winning a war."¹¹ In order to seize the initiative, China would call on the full spectrum of diplomatic, information, military, and economic tools (DIME) up to and including actions in the space and cyber domain, which China views as highly offense-dominant. These military actions would privilege preemptive and surprise attacks that seek to catch the opponent flat-footed and unable to properly respond. One fantastical vignette of such a strategy was published in the book *Ghost Fleet*, which sees a daring Sino-Russian surprise attack on the United States.¹²

Chinese development of Integrated Network and Electronic Warfare (INEW) is also an attempt to assist in seizing the initiative in conflict. Based on Sun Tzu's theories, one hallmark of Chinese thought is that it is best to "win without fighting."¹³ INEW assists in this goal by merging electronic warfare with more strategic network warfare. However, because INEW relies on surprise and deception in order to secure access to networks, its utility is limited to the early phase of a conflict, placing an extra premium on the initial period of war. INEW can also be combined with psychological, public opinion, and legal warfare (collectively referred to as the three warfares) that place an emphasis on nonkinetic efforts to solve crises in China's favor.

Similarities of Russian and Chinese Thinking in the Initial Period of War

Both Russia and China have developed their strategies around conflict with the United States and its allies. Russia views NATO as its largest geopolitical threat, and sees the recent deployment of troops to the Baltic states and Poland, as well as NATO missile defense installations in Poland and Romania, as destabilizing. At the same time, China is deeply concerned with both U.S. THAAD deployments to South Korea, and the U.S. presence in the South China Sea, where China views most features inside the "nine-dash line" as part of its sovereign territory. According to Lora Saalman, Chinese theorists back Russian actions in Ukraine, seeing them as a justifiable reaction to U.S. and European actions to destabilize the former Yanukovych government.¹⁴ Because Russia and China share a similar view of U.S. foreign policy (that of a unipolar hegemon), Chinese theorists are sympathetic to Russian arguments, and have "applaud[ed] Russia for its defiance."¹⁵ In its own context, the Chinese government cites the U.S. rebalance to Asia as a ploy to contain China's growing influence.¹⁶ Chinese policymakers could therefore justify offensive operations to secure defensive strategic interests in the face of perceived U.S. containment of China's legitimate return to great-power status.¹⁷

In addition, China appears to have endorsed the use of deniable coast guard, other nonmilitary, and special forces, and views them as a principal component to seize the initiative in conflict. Dubbed “little blue men,” purported Chinese fishermen have engaged in actions around disputed reefs and islands in the South China Sea.¹⁸ By utilizing fishermen, Chinese officials can both deny that they are connected to the ostensibly independent boats while at the same time using their presence to justify sending more coast guard and military vessels in order to build up an official presence. This process leads to a de facto Chinese annexation of the features, and like Russian actions, also fall below the threshold for an allied response. Similar to the Russian concept of “maskirovka,” a broad approach to military deception, China also relies on various forms of military deception to achieve its objectives.¹⁹

Cyberspace is another domain that has brought Russian and Chinese doctrine closer. While both countries stress information sovereignty, the military utility of cyberspace is also quite similar. Both retired Russian Gen. Charis Saifetdinov’s article in *Military Thought*²⁰ and Ye Zheng’s “Lectures on the Science of Information Operations”²¹ stress that operations in the cyber domain be continuous with no barrier between actions in peacetime and wartime. This is at odds with traditional U.S. approaches to conflict, which set clear boundary lines between different phases of war.

Both countries also utilize deniable operators for cyber operations (especially operations that consist of information operations—i.e., disseminating fake news, troll farms) and hacking to steal information.²² These groups could prove instrumental in attacking vital U.S. or allied command-and-control systems early in a conflict, which would result in degraded combat effectiveness for U.S. military forces.

While China continues to emphasize its active defense doctrine, Russian officials are actively considering the imposition of a preemptive strategy. Some Russian officials retain a view that the West is attempting to keep Russia on its knees, a sort of siege mentality that could justify offensive and escalatory actions from a defensive standpoint.²³ Current Russian nuclear doctrine exists to deter aggression against the state, but also retains a strategy for intra-war deterrence. This intra-war nuclear strategy is often referred to as the Russian “escalate to de-escalate” strategy. Thus, the nuclear realm presents one area of clear divergence between the military thinking of Russia and China. China retains a relatively small nuclear arsenal and a firm no-first-use commitment.

U.S. Responses

Russian and Chinese military convergence presents major challenges to the international order. Russian and Chinese policymakers have studied

approaches to thwart U.S. national interests without drawing the United States and its allies into a full-fledged conflict. This convergence poses the very real danger that the world will become more illiberal and more hostile to U.S. interests in small increments, without ever eliciting a response from the United States that deters aggressive behavior. What can the United States and its allies do to ensure that Russia and China do not benefit from this aggression? As Russia and China modernize their military capabilities, the United States and its allies must realize that the world is headed for an increase in great-power competition and must be prepared to message effectively that it will thwart actions that it deems unacceptable.

Because Russian and Chinese strategy is not aimed at defeating the United States and its allies in high-end battle, but rather to conduct low-level actions designed to exploit fissures in U.S.-led alliances,²⁴ the United States should work to firm up trust and communication in the allied structures to ensure that no state can benefit from aggression against the United States or its allies. Communication and trust can be improved by better coordinating allied response during crises and by establishing channels to regularly exchange concerns during peacetime. This requires allies to have a place at the table to both plan and address concerns with the United States and other partners. While NATO members have the North Atlantic Council as their primary roundtable forum, U.S. allies in the South and East China Sea continue to rely on a patchwork of bilateral treaties with the United States. Given that China's (and North Korea's) strategy is to divide the United States and its allies, the system of bilateral treaties should be enhanced with a similar Pacific Council. Efforts should be made toward enhancing the ability for joint operations, and to encourage buy-in from multiple allies. This would both boost allied capabilities, as well as send a strong signal to potential competitors that U.S. and allied commitments should not be tested. Because Russia and China are devoting more resources toward military capabilities, better alliance coordination will not deter all potential aggression; however, tailored political and military messaging will help protect core U.S. interests (including freedom of movement in the South China Sea, legal borders, and the right to self-determination of independent countries) from low-level salami tactics.

Finally, the United States should recognize that the development of norms for cyber and space capabilities is still in its infancy. As with the U.S. employment of nuclear weapons in World War II, the first major use of such capabilities will have a lasting effect on their use in future conflicts. Therefore, the United States should continue working with Russia and China to identify potential rules of the road in these domains, given that they are offense-dominant and

potentially highly escalatory (especially given the U.S. reliance on space for its intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and nuclear command-and-control systems). However, the United States and its allies should also prepare for conflict in degraded conditions and should train with its allies on how to develop comprehensive ground, air, and maritime pictures without relying on space assets that would likely be destroyed by adversary anti-satellite weaponry.

Conclusion

The U.S. military dominance in the 1990s sparked interest in Russian and Chinese military circles on how to develop theories of victory that would enable them to achieve their objectives against the United States. Currently, the two states have reached a consensus that the lowest-risk option is to engage in operations that exploit fissures in U.S.-led alliance structures and frustrate response options. The best method to achieve this is to engage in low-level actions that fall beneath the threshold for military responses and are quick enough to achieve objectives that establish facts on the ground. Russia and China's centralized autocracies advantage their wartime decisionmaking vis-à-vis the United States and NATO. The speed of that process puts the onus on the United States and its allies to respond rather than to deter aggression in the first place. Examples include Crimea, Chinese territorial encroachment against U.S. allies in the South China Sea, and soft-power information operations (i.e., 2016 interference in the U.S. presidential election). Going forward, the United States and its allies should recognize that the greatest threat remains the development of fissures between allies, and should prioritize the development of joint actions that would both develop new capabilities and signal to potential adversaries the firmness of U.S. allied structures.

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Shoot on Sight: The Politics of Indonesia's Escalating Anti-Drug Campaign

Andreyka Natalegawa

IN RECENT MONTHS, INDONESIAN PRESIDENT JOKO WIDODO HAS CALLED FOR AN ESCALATION IN ANTI-DRUG OPERATIONS, instructing police officials to shoot on sight suspected drug traffickers. Although President Widodo—popularly known as Jokowi—has long held a hardline stance against narcotics, his latest statements demonstrate a significant escalation in rhetoric, and the desire to flirt with increasingly authoritarian tactics in combating drugs. This change must be understood in the context of Indonesian domestic politics, and Jokowi's desire to project a tougher image in the antecedent of national elections in 2019. Taking stock of the political incentives that influence this escalation in turn impacts how observers should best advocate for rules-based order and transparency in the Indonesian justice system.

A shift in policy

To fully grasp this shift, observers must first assess Jokowi's record on anti-drug activities thus far. Indonesian anti-narcotics laws are notoriously draconian, mandating the execution of individuals caught trafficking drugs. Since taking office in 2014, Jokowi has cast himself as a hardliner on enacting drug-related policies, carrying

out the execution of 18 convicted drug traffickers in a three-year period.¹ This figure stands in contrast to the use of the death penalty for narcotics traffickers by Jokowi's predecessor Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. While President Yudhoyono approved a total of 21 executions between 2005 and 2013, only 3 of these cases were related to drugs or narcotics trafficking. Moreover, Yudhoyono's term in office was marked by an unofficial moratorium on capital punishment between late 2008 and early 2013.

Though he has already taken a stance on narcotics stricter than most of his immediate predecessors, Jokowi has in recent months expressed the desire to engage in even more severe anti-drug efforts. On July 21, 2017, Jokowi stated that Indonesia was in a state of emergency due to widespread drug use, consequently instructing law enforcement officers that "if [narcotics suspects] resist a little bit, just shoot them immediately."² Similarly, Tito Karnavian, the Indonesian national police chief who in 2016 strongly denied that his forces were to adopt a shoot-on-sight policy as it "leads to abuse of power,"³ has in recent months instructed officers "not to

hesitate shooting drug dealers who resist arrest.”⁴ Meanwhile, in response to criticism on the change in protocol, National Narcotics Agency (BNN) chief Budi Waseso opined that “people said that the BNN cannot shoot on the spot. Why not? There are too few drug dealers who are dead, while they have killed thousands of people.”⁵

This stronger stance on drugs extends beyond mere rhetoric. Seventy-nine narcotics suspects died in drug-related extrajudicial killings in 2017,⁶ a chilling increase in shooting incidents relative to the 14 killings in 2016 and 10 killings in 2015.⁷ When discussing the 58,000 drug-related arrests made in 2017, BNN chief Waseso quipped, “we actually hoped that they would resist, so we could shoot them.” The increase in number of extrajudicial killings indicates that law enforcement officials have heeded Jokowi’s command, and are more than willing to exercise the license to kill as they see fit. As widespread drug abuse continues in Indonesia, criminal narcotics trafficking is an issue that should be handled with appropriate concern. However, Jokowi’s readiness to dispense with due process and transparency in the criminal justice system demonstrates a grievous disregard for human rights, and marks a clear and distinct escalation of violence in the battle against drugs.

Electoral challenges and incentives

Acknowledging the violent escalation of anti-drug efforts in turn raises the question of why Jokowi has chosen this line of action. Here, it is fruitful to turn to similar cases in Southeast Asia in which populist leaders turned to hardline anti-drug policies. Former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra in 2003 enacted a violent campaign against narcotics trafficking, resulting in roughly 2,800 extrajudicial killings within the campaign’s first three months.⁸ More recently, President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines has embarked on a violent war on drugs, resulting in the killing of an estimated 12,000 suspected narcotics suspects since he took office in mid-2016.⁹

Despite these atrocities, it is arguable that both Thaksin and Duterte faced limited amounts of domestic opposition against their anti-drug policies. Thaksin’s iron-fisted approach was said to be popular among communities that had been ravaged by drug abuse,¹⁰ while Duterte was propelled to office in part because of the expectation that he would institute a nationwide narcotics crackdown. With this in mind, Jokowi’s violent turn could be seen as a similar maneuver as that of Thaksin and Duterte, part of a trend of populists engaging in violent anti-drug campaigns, resulting in increased support among domestic hardliners.

Viewing the drug war as a vehicle for mobilizing political support is largely consistent with messaging from the Indonesian government. The use of capital

punishment, extrajudicial killings, and other extreme methods in the anti-drug campaign have long been discussed by Indonesian leaders within the context of their political utility. Speaking on an informal pause on the use of capital punishment against drug traffickers, Indonesian Attorney General M. Prasetyo on February 1, 2017, noted that that executions were put on hold as the government was “focusing on the greater interest for the time being,” namely Indonesia’s aspirations to become a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.¹¹ Similarly, in discussing the potential of reinstating a moratorium on the death penalty, Jokowi stated, “Why not? But I must ask my people. If my people say OK, they say yes, I will start to prepare.”¹² That Jokowi seems cognizant of attitudes toward the anti-narcotics campaign and has still chosen to double down on such policies could be an indication of the strong political will behind these decisions. Thus, Jokowi’s shift in rhetoric on drugs should be seen as both product and tool of domestic political agendas, as well as possibly his electability in the upcoming 2019 presidential election.

As a means of bridging cleavages to prevent social division from harming his own prospects in 2019, Jokowi has in the past year galvanized the Indonesian public by adopting the image of a strong, nationalistic leader.

Though he remains by far the most electable candidate in the field,¹³ Jokowi faces a major leadership challenge in the form of rising populism and xenophobia in Indonesia. Recently in the 2016 Jakarta gubernatorial election, a key Jokowi ally was elected out of office by a wave of hardline Islamist and nativist fervor. As a means of bridging cleavages to prevent social division from

harming his own prospects in 2019, Jokowi has in the past year galvanized the Indonesian public by adopting the image of a strong, nationalistic leader. A survey of Indonesian voters found that 19.7 percent of respondents indicated that their support for a presidential candidate was most influenced by the candidate’s level of assertiveness, nearly double the number of respondents who preferred the second-most favored characteristic of the given candidate being a populist.¹⁴ While the above survey found that the death penalty itself was not the most important issue for voters (only 0.8 percent of respondents indicated that the death penalty specifically was the main reason they were satisfied with Jokowi), the assertive qualities associated with law-and-order candidates who enact such policies remain crucially important. Thus, in pursuit of shoring up his credentials as an assertive candidate to reduce the threat posed by his challengers, Jokowi seems to have taken cues from the intense support that

buoyed Duterte to office, resulting in the adoption of increasingly authoritarian attitudes toward law enforcement and narcotics.

Why and how should Washington respond?

The looming threat of an increasingly violent crackdown on drugs in Indonesia should spark concern among policymakers in Washington and beyond. As one of the world's largest democracies, Indonesia should in theory be well positioned to act in concert with the United States in promoting a secure, rules-based order across the Indo-Pacific. Yet, by openly favoring extrajudicial action in combating the drug crisis, Jokowi and other Indonesian leaders have demonstrated a willingness to bend the limits of the law in pursuit of political gain, marking a stain on Indonesia's democratic success story. Given the geopolitical challenges posed by instability and a growing democratic deficit across the Indo-Pacific, the curtailment of Indonesia's ability to act as a credible advocate for rules-based order and human rights norms should not be understated.

The escalation of anti-drug efforts should be of note to international observers as it directly impacts the safety and security of foreign nationals in Indonesia. Foreigners are often overrepresented in cases of drug-related extrajudicial killings, comprising 16 percent of fatal shootings between January and July 2017 relative to their status as only 1.7 percent of all suspects arrested by the BNN in that same period.¹⁵ Meanwhile, capital punishment cases also demonstrate an overrepresentation of foreigners, with foreign nationals involved in roughly 84 percent of drug-related executions since 1995. In reference to foreign drug traffickers, Jokowi in July 2017 stated, "I have told you, just be firm, especially with foreign drug dealers who enter the country and resist [upon arrest]. Gun them down. Give no mercy."¹⁶ Thus, with regards to facing drug-related killings, whether legal or extrajudicial, foreign nationals seem to face disproportionate risk. As far as these anti-drug measures may be influenced chiefly by domestic electoral politics, its impact is transnational, and could demand a response from an international audience.

In March 2017, Indonesian authorities relocated at least seven death row prisoners to Nusa Kambangan, the notorious island prison where Indonesia carries out most of its drug-related executions. This group of prisoners, all foreign nationals, included U.S. citizen Frank Amado, who in 2010 was sentenced the death penalty for drug trafficking. If his sentence is carried out, Amado will be the first U.S. citizen executed by Indonesia. While U.S. State Department officials in 2011 stated that they would not intervene in the case,¹⁷ it is uncertain whether officials in the Trump administration would respond with similar restraint. Despite President Trump's hardline rhetorical stance on drugs in the U.S., his nationalistic predilections make it entirely possible that the execution of a U.S. citizen by Indonesia could incite a diplomatic dispute.

Yet, in spite of the heightened risk that foreign nationals hold in becoming ensnared in Indonesian anti-drug efforts, policymakers in Washington and beyond should remain cautious in their criticism of Jokowi's hardline shift, for fear of playing into the politicization of the anti-drug campaign. Political tensions and public division wrought by the contentious 2016 Jakarta gubernatorial election have forced the Indonesian political establishment to lean strongly into nationalism as a unifying factor, fostering a wave of nationalist and anti-foreign sentiment.¹⁸ This makes it difficult for international actors to meaningfully engage with Indonesia on its anti-drug practices, for any appeals to curb extrajudicial killings could be easily dismissed as an affront to Indonesia's sovereignty. During a diplomatic row over the then-imminent execution of Australian citizens Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, Indonesian minister of home affairs Tjahjo Kumolo in March 2015 dismissed international concerns about the executions, stating, "if there were a thousand Tony Abbotts it wouldn't be an issue. Whoever it is—a thousand secretary generals of the U.N., a thousand prime ministers—Indonesia is a sovereign nation."¹⁹ Similarly, Jokowi denounced foreign intervention in the case, saying "it is our sovereign right to exercise our law."²⁰ One can imagine that, if the United States or others were to criticize the recent spate of extrajudicial killings, Jokowi and other Indonesian leaders would likely respond in a similar way.

Conclusion

The invocation of sovereign rights in response to criticism on anti-drug policies carries consequence as to how policymakers and observers should best advocate for rules-based order and transparency in the Indonesian justice system. When framed in context of nationalism and sovereignty, drug executions and other extreme measures become more palatable to the Indonesian public, even among those who would otherwise oppose such policies. The public support galvanized by this emotional appeal in turn could legitimize and affirm the political utility of Jokowi's decision to increase the severity of his war on drugs, bringing about the potential for further abuses of power. Thus, in order to prevent forcing a situation in which leaders and security forces are incentivized to crack down further, international actors who choose to confront Indonesia on the escalation of drug killings must remain cognizant of how their messaging will be received by the Indonesian public.

This is not to say the United States and other invested parties should not hold Indonesia accountable when it comes to extrajudicial killings and other rights abuses. These conversations must remain an integral component of U.S. foreign policy, an essential tool in establishing a normative framework for human rights and good governance in the region. However, given Jokowi's apparent desire to lean into nationalist fervor in anticipation of the 2019 elections,

foreign observers must be cautious and thoughtful when addressing rights violations in Indonesia. Efforts to address the escalation must be formulated with a low-key and long-term approach in mind, as a means of reducing the incentive for Indonesian leaders to posture in shoring up nationalist support. Through coming to a broader understanding of the political forces that have spawned Jokowi's war on drugs, human rights advocates will be better prepared in fighting for a more humane and transparent Indonesia.

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Russia and Japan on Different Wavelengths in the Kuril Islands

Aleksandra Bausheva

OVER SEVEN DECADES HAVE PASSED SINCE WORLD WAR II ENDED, but not for Russia and Japan—at least not officially. The status of the four southernmost Kuril Islands, nestled between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean, has proved an impassable roadblock on the way toward an official peace treaty between the two nations. Although controlled by Russia since the end of the war, the islands, referred to as the Southern Kurils by Russia and the Northern Territories by Japan, are treated as sovereign territory by both, creating a sharp point of geostrategic contention. The lack of flexibility on both sides has constrained progress in Russo-Japanese relations. Recent efforts to establish joint economic activity on the Kurils have been featured in the media, sparking new hope for a forthcoming resolution, but this optimism is misplaced. The contrast in underlying expectations and intentions at the negotiation table will keep Russia and Japan at odds, despite recent glimpses of progress.

Intimidated by the rapidly increasing Chinese influence in East Asia, Japan recently turned to Russia in search of a new regional ally—a neighbor rich in energy sources in which Japan seeks to diversify.¹ Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan

announced a new approach to Russia in May 2016,² which was the first suggestion of a potential turning point in resolving the 70-year-old disagreement. Under the new policy, Abe committed to settling the dispute over the islands by the end of his term and focused on a strategy of economic incentivization. He presented a cooperation plan to Russia that included eight key points for strengthening cooperation in areas like business development and energy.³ Optimism for progress grew further in December 2016 during Vladimir Putin's visit to Japan, the first in 11 years, when the two leaders agreed to launch joint economic activity on the islands.⁴

The process of implementing these ideas began quickly. In June 2017, a delegation of 70 Japanese officials and businessmen visited the Kurils⁵ to explore the options for business opportunities on the islands. The historic mission inspected potential facilities for joint economic projects and analyzed possible development tracks in energy, fishing, transport, and tourism.⁶ Riding the momentum, Japanese and Russian foreign ministers met in August to discuss promising development courses in aquaculture, wind power,

package tours, and other areas, which were later selected for priority implementation by Abe and Putin during their talks at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.⁷

The situation appears promising: despite the persistent disagreement on the political affiliation of the islands, Russia and Japan established a joint investment fund worth \$1 billion,⁸ Putin and Abe discussed the hopeful possibility of a long-awaited peace treaty⁹ at a bilateral meeting at the G20 summit, and an “atmosphere of trust, friendship and cooperation”¹⁰ began rapidly filling the bitter Kurilian air. To cement the new friendship, Putin and Abe pronounced 2018 as the Year of Japan in Russia and the Year of Russia in Japan. While discussions of even linking Sakhalin and Hokkaido with a railroad have also emerged,¹¹ a metaphorical bridge of understanding already seemed to stretch between the two countries.

Against this backdrop, it seems that the two nations still have fundamentally different ideas about the nature and long-term purpose of these agreements. In relying on economic inducement, Japan has overestimated what economic cooperation in the Kurils is worth to Russia. This is where a critical disconnect exists.

A country with scarce natural resources, Japan would certainly benefit from a territory rich in fishing grounds and, supposedly, offshore reserves of oil and gas. In addition, given the “new changes in the strategic environment of the Asia-Pacific region, such as the issues concerning North Korea, the rapid growth of China, and moves toward the creation of an East Asian community,”¹² it is only natural that Abe would prefer to have the islands under his control as a precautionary measure. But perhaps most importantly, for Japan regaining the control over the islands has always been a matter of national pride—so much that it claims that the islands have never once belonged to another country.¹³

For Russia, who has been comfortable maintaining the status quo, the joint economic activity has been entirely separate from the territorial issue from the start. Perhaps the most telling evidence of this is the consistency with which Russia has been increasing its military presence on the Kurils, often in parallel to developments in economic cooperation. Right before Putin’s visit to Japan in December 2016, Russia deployed anti-ship missile complexes on Southern Kurils.¹⁴ In February 2017, the Russian Defense Minister announced that Russia was planning to deploy three divisions on the islands as part of “active work to protect the Kurils,”¹⁵ and in October, it was announced that the establishment of a Kuril naval base was already underway.¹⁶ Russia is not planning to stop there: the deployment of the Bal and Bastion missile systems on two of the islands is scheduled for 2018.¹⁷ Regardless of the progress of joint economic development,

Russia clearly gives precedence to strategic goals over any commitment to economic cooperation with Japan on the islands.

Regardless of the progress of joint economic development, Russia clearly gives precedence to strategic goals over any commitment to economic cooperation with Japan on the islands.

Russia's geostrategic interest in the islands is clear from Putin's statement made at the International Economic Forum held in June 2017, in which he admitted that "there is a possibility of U.S. troop deployment on these territories"¹⁸ if they were to pass under Japan's control. Similar concerns were voiced by Russia in regards to the planned deployment of the Aegis Ashore

ballistic missile defense system in mainland Japan, which would be under the control of the U.S. military.¹⁹ This pattern indicates that Russia's military progression in the Kurils is part of a larger picture, and this is not the only instance from which United States influence comes into play. Recent incidents, like the Russian sanctioning of a Hokkaido mayor in retaliation for Japanese support of Ukraine-related sanctions^{20,21}, illustrate that Japan serves as another outlet for the Russo-American rivalry. Dominance in geostrategic competitions is far higher on Russia's list of priorities than the possible economic benefits from a small territory like the Kurils. In effect, Russia has already repeatedly demonstrated what Japan refuses to see: cooperation in the Kurils is totally secondary to geopolitical goals. For Putin, economic discussions were never part of the territorial equation, stating that it is "only Japan that believes it has territorial problems with Russia," while Russia has "no territorial problems [with Japan] at all."²²

The current situation is not hopeless. Significant progress in bilateral relations has been made by both countries in the last couple of years. The Far Eastern neighbors are evidently taking positive steps, and the unprecedented turnover growth between Russia and Japan²³ is a solid foundation for future economic cooperation. But whether this new partnership can end the protracted chapter of World War II is an entirely separate question approached by the two countries from contrasting angles to which so far there has been no real middle ground. For an understanding to be reached, the two nations first need to realize that they have been speaking two different languages. If they refuse to face the disparity in their positions, the territorial deadlock is bound to continue and World War II will technically carry on.

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Exporting Obesity: Micronesia as a Microcosm

Elise Green

CHANGING DIETS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PATTERNS ARE DRIVING A NUTRITION TRANSITION ACROSS GLOBAL POPULATIONS.¹ Amid such rapid change, the United States is culpable of exacerbating poor diets in developing nations. Urbanization, economic growth, technological change, and cultural shifts have led to decreased physical activity and increased consumption of fat, sugar, and processed foods.² The 2017 Global Nutrition Report highlighted the interconnectedness of nutrition to several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, with over 2 billion overweight or obese adults and 41 million overweight children in 2016, the world is falling short of global nutrition targets.³ Through billions spent on foreign aid, free trade, and private-sector expansion into emerging global markets, the United States contributes significantly to skyrocketing obesity rates worldwide. Analyzing the U.S. role in the nutrition transition in Micronesia highlights the imperative for the United States to recognize the health consequences of globalization and take increased preventative and remedial action against obesity and diet-related diseases.

As the primary champion of Micronesian sovereignty and economic advancement, the United States exercises strong influence on over 2,000 Pacific islands. The 1945 United Nations Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands and 1986 Compact of Free Association (COFA) established the United States as a significant donor in Micronesia, namely in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Mariana Islands. Today's COFA, renewed in 2003, maintains grants to the FSM and RMI through the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs. By the year 2023, the FSM and RMI will have received about \$3.5 billion⁴ for advancing their economic self-sufficiency through building private- and public-sector capacity, with priority on education and health.⁵ Although that amount is dwarfed by U.S. grants to other developing nations, it nevertheless asserts U.S. authority in the region. Without this economic role in Micronesia, another power would likely supplant the United States⁶ or the islands would struggle to stay afloat.

While COFA promotes health through building capacity, infrastructure, and

Absent of health-conscious planning and obesity prevention measures, U.S. investments in Micronesia will continue to prove self-undermining by accentuating the transition to nutrient-poor, energy-dense foods.

programs, the agreement has catalyzed a transition to nutrient-poor diets and a significant burden of diet-related diseases in Micronesia.⁷ The diplomatic partnerships fostered by COFA have facilitated an influx of U.S. commodities into Micronesia that, perhaps for the practicalities of shelf life and transportation, include many processed junk foods. Frozen turkey tails, which are deemed “inedible” in the United States because of their high fat percentage, slip into Micronesian markets where they are sold for under

\$1 a pound.⁸ Deprived of a comprehensive high school lunch program on Kosrae (FSM), students commonly consume a mixture of uncooked ramen noodles and powdered drink mix. Malnutrition, reduced agricultural activities, and increasingly sedentary lifestyles⁹ are key reasons why obesity rates reach 53.2 percent for adults in the FSM,¹⁰ and why raised blood glucose, high blood pressure, and obesity rank as the greatest risk factors for adult health in the RMI.¹¹ Absent of health-conscious planning and obesity prevention measures, U.S. investments in Micronesia will continue to prove self-undermining by accentuating the transition to nutrient-poor, energy-dense foods.

As the world’s largest economy and the provider of the greatest sum of official development assistance, the United States is in a unique position either to perpetuate the obesity pandemic or take significant action against it. Because Micronesia exhibits the highest obesity rates in the world, relies overwhelmingly on the United States for development aid, and has a small population, the islands are an ideal region to implement, accelerate, and scale-up influential nutrition programs and policies. While the United States already provides some support to Micronesia, such as through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Peace Corps (ending in June 2018),¹² the sharp increase in the islands’ obesity rates over the past 40 years shows that the United States can beef up its effort.¹³

In Micronesia, the United States should take action against obesity through nutrition-sensitive programs, fiscal policies, and research. The Children’s Healthy Living Program (CHLP), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, includes steps for preventing child obesity and expanding existing research on nutrition in U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands.¹⁴ CHLP and similar programs should be implemented and expanded, particularly if cultural sensitivity and collaborations with local stakeholders to promote community ownership, empowerment,

and program sustainability can be included. Recognizing the inherent cultural differences between individual islands is important because, while the Micronesian islands share the Western Pacific Ocean, they have drastically different traditions, languages, and norms that may impact the success of a health program. Additionally, social and development impact bonds and taxes on tobacco, sugar, and sweetened beverages, such as those that have proven successful in Mexico¹⁵ and Brazil,¹⁶ could help curb consumption in Micronesia while increasing government revenue for health initiatives. Furthermore, despite current and past research initiatives in the islands, the sheer lack of data to complete the country profiles within the 2017 Global Nutrition Report demonstrates the need for further investigative research efforts.

Because of U.S. leadership in Micronesia and in emerging economies more broadly, the onus is on the United States to reevaluate its foreign policies with a focus on dietary health. Especially with COFA expiring in 2023 and discussions of renewal already underway, Micronesia provides a practical opportunity to exhibit U.S. leadership through context-specific health programs, policies, and research. Beyond Micronesia, the United States should analyze its nutrition responsibility in other developing nations like Mexico, Brazil, and China. The U.S. role in the North American Free Trade Agreement, for instance, faces criticism for increasing high-fructose corn syrup exports to Mexico by more than 1,000 percent between 1996 and 2012.¹⁷ U.S. soda companies, additionally, have shifted their portfolios to increase revenue and calories per capita sold in Brazil and China,¹⁸ while obesity rates in those countries continue to soar. U.S. policies and private-sector expansion engender potentially costly and complex health consequences not only in Micronesia, but worldwide.

By scrutinizing the health impacts of its global presence, the United States can create an enabling environment to keep the global community on-track for achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal of achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture. Worldwide, the diets of populations in developing countries are changing faster than existing health systems can accommodate, and an incessant expansion of obesity rates may impede economic progress. The United States needs to step up to the table and mitigate the detrimental effects of the nutrition transition.

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Evolving Tech, Evolving Terror

Seth Harrison

OVER THE COURSE OF THE 16-YEAR WAR ON TERROR, experts have identified political and socioeconomic conditions as root causes of terrorism. The technological enablers that make terrorism possible are less studied, however. Innovations in computing and telecommunications—like widespread internet access,¹ end-to-end encryption,² and virtual private network (VPN) usage³—have made new types of operations possible for a higher number of radicalized individuals.

The Islamic State best capitalized on the new technologically driven landscape by remotely inspiring and directing attacks.⁴ These operations require little training or tactical planning, involve crude tools—like knives or cars—and can be conducted by anyone, anywhere. The combination of simple operations and increased communicative capacity has made terrorism accessible to the masses.

To date, mass-accessible operations have been confined to the West. However, as ISIS transitions to a more conventional terrorist network,⁵ these attack types' geography stands to expand. As a result, policymakers would be well-served to incorporate technological conditions into their projections of emerging ISIS hotspots.

Malaysia provides an important case study in the emerging threat of remotely inspired attacks because of its widespread internet access, popular encrypted messaging services, proliferating use of VPNs, and a potential cohort of veteran foreign fighters returned from the Syrian battlefield to spur radicalized individuals into action.

Technological Capabilities

The first and most basic capability, access to the internet, has changed the way individuals radicalize and plan attacks. On the radicalization side, online platforms offer more opportunities to become radicalized and accelerate the speed with which radicalized individuals mobilize.⁶ Once radicalized, jihadists have used the internet for communication and operational planning. The attack on the Curtis Culwell Center represents the most extreme occurrence, as al-Shabaab-turned-ISIS operative Mohammad Abdullahi Hassan directed the perpetrators to conduct the operation through Twitter.⁷

As with other developing countries, internet usage in Malaysia is becoming increasingly common. Sixty-eight percent⁸ of Malaysians use the internet nationwide. When parsed for age, that rate climbs to 91

Policymakers would be well-served to incorporate technological conditions into their projections of emerging ISIS hotspots.

percent among Malaysians 18–34. Jihadist content producers—namely ISIS—have capitalized on the trend, targeting Malaysian youth⁹ in their recruitment efforts.

Second, end-to-end encrypted messengers—like WhatsApp and Telegram—afford their users privacy by scrambling data¹⁰ sent

from the sending device, through the cell tower and server, to the receiving device. In terrorist applications, these encrypted messaging services allow for unprecedented operational security, limiting law enforcement's ability to view or disrupt these communiqués.

Encrypted messaging is surprisingly popular in Malaysia and represents three of the top twenty-five¹¹ most popular mobile applications in the country. Violent extremists can leverage this fact, employing the technology to plot domestic operations.

Finally, in the same way that prospective terrorists use encrypted messaging for offense—to stage attacks—VPNs allow radicalized individuals to play defense. As their name suggests, VPNs provide users with a private connection to the internet, replacing the user's Internet Provider address with one from a VPN provider. In doing so, the technology effectively anonymizes the internet activity of the user. For terrorists, this prevents law enforcement from tracking their movement and intentions.¹²

In Malaysia, VPN usage outpaces most Western countries. Approximately one in three¹³ internet users anonymize their online presence. The reasons for VPN usage vary: popular rationales in Malaysia range from accessing free entertainment to hiding web browsing from the government. This existing VPN culture can readily turn sinister and the technology applied to jihadist activity.

Terrorist Intent

Malaysia's technological landscape is necessary but not sufficient for operations with low technical barriers. Terrorist intent in the country is required for ISIS to ramp up its activity. Here, both internal and external pressures have resulted in populations who may use technology to conduct terrorist operations.

Despite the geographic distance between Malaysia and the Syrian Civil War, returning Malaysian foreign fighters from the conflict stand as a concern to policymakers. Though estimates vary wildly, as many as 400 Malaysians¹⁴ entered the conflict zone in Syria and Iraq. Further, eight confirmed cases¹⁵ of foreign

fighters returning to Malaysia highlight the threat's viability. This number stands to grow, as Malaysian security services reported that Turkey has been deporting non-Malaysian foreign fighters to Malaysia.¹⁶

Internal changes to Malaysian society exacerbate the terrorist threat. Malaysia is beginning to embrace more conservative religious practices¹⁷ and politically this is spurred by Malaysia's ruling United Malays National Organization (UMNO) party. This process has the dual effect of normalizing conservative interpretations of Islam for some, and generating public distrust of the government for others. In the latter case, this distrust may further propagate VPN use among large segments of the population—a dynamic that extremists can tap into. Further, ISIS has specifically targeted Malaysia with Malay-language propaganda.¹⁸ These dynamics have translated into real action: the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) have disrupted at least 14 ISIS-related plots.¹⁹

Recommendations

In Malaysia and similarly positioned countries, some have advocated for stronger key disclosure laws,²⁰ which compel suspects to surrender their passwords. In many cases, however—as with the San Bernardino attack²¹—the keyholders are deceased. Others have called for telecommunication companies to build backdoors²² into their products, which would give law enforcement a way to access encrypted data. Although methods for VPN blocking exist, VPNs remain largely unregulated internationally.

These policy options all attempt merely to disrupt the technology's distribution but do little to undermine the technology itself. In other words, VPNs and encryption can exist without VPN and encrypted messaging providers—especially in the context of illicit activity. As a result, policymakers must look elsewhere to combat the threat.

More promising approaches involve placing a renewed emphasis on defensive counterterrorism measures. While continuing to work to prevent attacks, law enforcement should also explore new ways to mitigate attacks' effectiveness. Examples of this thinking have begun to emerge in Europe, where new barriers²³ will limit the impact of vehicular rammings.

While the government's ability to disrupt accessible terror is limited, it can consider the availability of these technologies as a factor in determining high-risk locations. This increased awareness can be used to better target preventative efforts and assist officials in finetuning their threat assessments.

Conclusions

In the recent months, counterterrorism policy conversations have become increasingly politicized. For some, terrorists are irredeemable and

counterterrorism strategy should be driven by kinetic force. Others maintain that counterterrorism strategy should focus on the root causes of terror. In the past, counterterror policy has largely remained immune from the divisive political discourse that has plagued other public policy issues. If counterterrorism's technocratic character is to continue, apolitical approaches to counterterrorism will be required.

Careful analysis of the technological enablers of terrorism fits squarely into this model. It captures both tactical and strategic considerations warranted by emerging technologies and, favoring more defensive approaches, occupies space far enough downstream to sidestep counterterrorism's thornier political questions. It remains clear, however, that as more people gain access to more sophisticated technologies, counterterrorism efforts will have to adapt.

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Mind the Gap: Why Mental Health Care Matters for Rebuilding Syria

Isra Hussain

THE ONGOING WAR IN SYRIA HAS ENGENDERED DAMAGE THAT MAY NOT BE UNDERSTOOD for years, particularly on the three million Syrian children born since the start of the war. Available data indicates that nearly half of all Syrian children display symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)¹ and a quarter face intellectual and developmental challenges.² The result is an entire generation susceptible to everything from depression and anxiety to behavioral dysfunction and radicalization.

Mental health care must promptly be added to the humanitarian response in Syria, in part by collaboration with international NGOs that can provide immediate support to those in need. Sustainable infrastructure must be established through degree programs that will integrate mental health care into Syria's primary health system and strengthen the mental health workforce in the region. More comprehensive emergency and long-term services will prevent a "lost generation of children"³ for Syria's future state-building prospects.

Children become highly susceptible to depression, anxiety, and other forms of mental illness in the short term when living in conflict zones.⁴ These challenges often act as barriers to physical health, education, and economic stability. Upon arrival in countries of first

asylum, only half of all Syrian children were enrolled in schools; enrollment rates in Lebanon and Turkey were as low as 30 percent.⁵ Even when they do finally enroll, Syrian children are more likely than their non-refugee peers to receive failing grades or drop out as they deal with ongoing psychological trauma. Evidence suggests that untreated trauma-related mental and behavioral disorders may also lead to substance abuse and significant economic productivity losses.⁶

In the long term, a traumatic event can lead to behavioral dysfunction and juvenile delinquency: reporters visiting Syria speak of animals who have been "mutilated by children who had learned unspeakable cruelty."⁷ Research of youth within the U.S. criminal justice system suggests that repeated exposure to violence is associated with higher rates of delinquent behavior.⁸ The 1.2 billion people currently living in fragile and conflict settings⁹ may regularly experience and bear witness to targeted killings and gender-based violence, and refugee children who have been exposed to conflict exhibit increased rates of domestic violence.¹⁰

Trauma and mental health issues may also play important roles in children's

More comprehensive emergency and long-term services will prevent a “lost generation of children” for Syria’s future state-building prospects.

vulnerability to radicalization. Mediated by ongoing socioeconomic disadvantage, past trauma exposure has been linked to post-conflict distress and anger,¹¹ especially in children who are more likely to be exposed to violence and crime than are adults.¹² When no psychosocial intervention is provided,

continuous trauma may cause grievances about injustice and perceived threats, both risk factors for radicalization.¹³ There is no “one size fits all” explanation for why some people are more prone to this process than others. But given the relationship between mental health and the variables that are generally associated with radicalization, mental health care services should be considered key components for future state-building efforts in Syria and globally.

Though humanitarian medical providers in Syria have attempted to scale up mental health care,¹⁴ many children still have not and will not receive adequate care. In some regions of Syria, aid workers have said there is just one professional psychiatrist¹⁵ for more than 1 million people.

Integrating mental health care services will therefore require a sustainable and multilayered system of response. These services must go beyond the provision of basic needs by instituting community-based health care systems.¹⁶ This model of public health embraces coordination between local leaders, public organizations, and private NGOs to address the community’s needs. Humanitarian agencies that are providing emergency services should also collaborate with development organizations that have an established presence in conflict zones to ensure the longevity of a more robust mental health system.

Respondents can coordinate more immediate plans to help alleviate long-term effects of untreated disorders. Some organizations, such as a German NGO called the International Psychosocial Organization (IPSO), have experience training counselors in conflict zones. IPSO has set up recruitment and training of Syrian refugees in Germany, who then deliver online care in Arabic to affected individuals in Syria.¹⁷ This type of collaboration provides immediate and culturally sensitive care to areas that need it most.

Syria is also facing a shortage of mental health professionals outside of psychiatry that focus on counseling interventions, which help promote protective factors for radicalization such as social support and cohesion.¹⁸ This type of preventative therapy would include structured problem solving, active listening, and help in reframing problems. In Palestine, Médecins San Frontières partnered with Al-Najah University to set up a master’s in psychology program, its purpose to

strengthen the mental health workforce in Syria.¹⁹ Responders should consider similar programs for Syria's population as a long-term response to its mental health crisis and sustainable state-building measures.

There is large economic incentive for investing in mental health care: A World Health Organization (WHO)-led study concluded that there was a high benefit-to-cost ratio for scaled-up depression and anxiety treatment across country income groups.²⁰ Furthermore, studies show that when provided treatment, children tend to show the most resilience.²¹

Prior to the civil war, Syria had been a middle-income country with relatively good health indicators. Since the onset of the conflict, the deliberate targeting of medical facilities, most of all by the Assad regime, has destroyed the health care system.²² Moving forward, regardless of who is in power, creating robust mental health infrastructure will address long-term risks to social cohesion and stability. This will not happen without coordinated efforts by the Syrian government, development organizations, and humanitarian responders.

When a whole population must focus on staying alive, it becomes harder to focus on children's healthy development. But these children are the Syria of the future. It is therefore crucial to prioritize the mental health of Syrian children today.

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Improving Disaster Response through Aerospace Technology

Kyle Libby

A CATAclysmic Series of Natural Disasters in 2017, particularly in the western hemisphere, exposed a widespread lack of disaster preparedness, as well as many shortcomings in recovery strategies. Several severe earthquakes struck Mexico and a series of hurricanes and tropical storms tore through the Caribbean, decimating Puerto Rico and dealing considerable damage to Texas and Florida. The days following hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, or other disasters require a coordinated and timely deployment of response resources, but recovery efforts are often stymied by a lack of information, disrupted communications, and hazardous conditions. In these circumstances, the aerospace field offers tremendous capabilities for effective disaster response. With the use of satellites, drones, and other aerial technologies, responders can identify areas in need of aid, establish clear routes, restore communications, and crowdsource imagery data to provide rapid, cost-effective analysis. By analyzing the capabilities offered by these aerospace technologies, it becomes clear that increased funding and development

would prove a boon to effective disaster response and recovery.

Projects already in place highlight the importance of the aerospace realm in disaster situations, but also reveal a difficult path for further development. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) satellite division operates the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES) series, the first line of defense against natural disasters. The most recent model, GOES-16, enables the vector tracking of storms and the identification of flash floods, hail, and tornadoes.¹ From the satellites in geostationary orbit, NOAA receives continuous updates by the half-hour, providing a constant source of critical information to the benefit of affected areas. While evidence clearly shows² that the strength and frequency of meteorological events are increasing,^{3,4} the Trump administration has directed that NOAA's satellite division will be cut by \$513 million,⁵ including a 22 percent reduction for the satellite division. The cuts could amount to a dereliction of the emergency response system, trading long-term disaster preparation and mitigation for

short-term fiscal advantages. Reduced situational awareness produces slower responses and increases unnecessary evacuations, resulting in further potential casualties and higher total spending.

While GOES provides a swath of imagery and environmental data, particularly for natural disasters, the cost-benefit analysis indicates that it is worth the price tag. For example, by improving forecasts and thus reducing the number of unnecessary evacuations, GOES produces an estimated \$1.4 billion annually in benefits.⁶ With a ten-year life-cycle of \$10.83 billion, GOES-16 is cost-effective for storm preparation alone, not counting benefits from improved forecasting in aviation, boating, and air quality, among others.^{7,8} However, NOAA is not the only entity to capitalize on the positive potential of the aerospace realm.

Elsewhere in aerospace imaging, DigitalGlobe, a commercial satellite imagery provider, focuses on high-resolution, multispectral imagery for disaster response and recovery. Multispectral imagery offers a degree of information and clarity that standard imagery does not generally provide. The company's Open Data program was created to provide "high-resolution satellite imagery to support disaster recovery in the wake of large-scale natural disasters."⁹ During the December 2017 fires in California, DigitalGlobe's satellites were able to provide ground images despite the shrouding effect of large smoke clouds. Such information improves firefighters' ability to identify vulnerable structures and forecast the direction of the fire, an invaluable service in emergency situations where wasted seconds can mean lives lost.

While useful, the satellite images themselves require processing and analysis to become practical for disaster relief. While there are programs that can automate the identification of areas of interest, crowdsourcing can improve the accuracy of such analysis. To address this need, DigitalGlobe hosts a volunteer imagery analysis website called Tomnod. Campaigns can range from identifying the habitats of seals in Antarctica to spotting washed-out bridges and landslides in hurricane-affected areas.¹⁰ By providing before and after imagery, volunteers can tag viable routes for responders and help with damage assessments.¹¹ While accuracy and precision of human analysis may come into question, Tomnod takes into account where the preponderance of tags have been placed; places with more tags from various users are considered more likely to be a legitimate result, requiring a critical mass of concurrence. Crowdsourced analysis can be immensely beneficial to slower recoveries over large areas, where the quantity of data to be analyzed can quickly outpace the capabilities of a single disaster response team.

Disasters also frequently damage communications infrastructure, either limiting or preventing victims and responders from communicating effectively.

While satellite communication is possible, its costs and reliability are as of yet prohibitive. Alphabet, Google's parent organization, has developed a method for quickly patching the communication gaps created by natural disasters. Instead of attempting to rebuild cell towers or replace underground cables to restore service, Project Loon lofts a fleet of communications balloons over the affected area. In 2017, following Hurricane Maria, the Federal Communications Commission approved an experimental license for Project Loon to launch over Puerto Rico.¹² In the aftermath of the storm, it provided 100,000 residents intermittent access to internet and text messages.¹³ By restoring connectivity, the technology allows affected populations to provide critical updates to disaster response efforts.

Closer to the ground, the use of drones in disaster areas has been increasing as of late. The senseFly eBee is an automated drone mapping system that, though toy-like, rapidly provides complex, three-dimensional mapping.¹⁴ This technology had been adopted by first responders to swiftly acquire low-level, granular pictures of disaster zones, allowing for the identification of critical context and needs at a personal level. Manually flown drones also enable short-range, live video in otherwise unreachable areas. The difference between low-level drone imagery and multispectral satellite imagery is in time and detail. While a satellite's persistence is a benefit for longer operations, it can take time to reposition to collect the needed imagery. The eBee's automation and maneuverability allow data collection to happen immediately over a tailored and potentially hazardous region.¹⁵ As an example, drones can be used in floods to identify those people who need aerial rescue and could even be capable of deploying life preservers.^{16,17} Drones promise enormous potential for expediting and improving rescue efforts and demonstrate another way aerospace technologies can change disaster response and recovery for the better.

Reducing the budgets for critical situational awareness programs is a first step toward increased vulnerability.

Given the potential of aerospace technology and the ramifications of halfhearted disaster response, cutting funding for aerospace technologies should prove antithetical to lawmakers' purpose. Reducing the budgets for critical situational awareness

programs is a first step toward increased vulnerability. Policymakers should focus on the long-term cost savings of these disaster-management programs, as their contributions have been comprehensively analyzed and shown to be positive.¹⁸ Mitigating the extent of the damage with proper foresight, and boosting recovery times with advanced disaster-response technology, can

reduce loss of life and economic malaise. In this light, NOAA's budget should not be cut, and more investments should be made into aerospace technologies for disaster response and recovery. As global climate change may increasingly influence the frequency and severity of disasters on the global scale, these technologies will only become more critical.

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One Country, Two Futures? How Hong Kong's System Will Survive

Jonathan Robison

WHEN THE CLOCK STRUCK MIDNIGHT ON JUNE 30, 1997, the blue British ensign flying over Victoria Harbor was lowered, and the red orchid flag of Hong Kong was raised. The United Kingdom returned Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty after more than 150 years of colonial rule. At that moment, One Country, Two Systems (1C2S), the arrangement governing the relationship between Hong Kong and China's central government through 2047, came into force. Today however, the long-term prospects of 1C2S remain uncertain due to Beijing's increasingly heavy-handed assertion of control and influence in the territory. Despite this, China's interests in ensuring the rule of law necessary for a global financial hub, upholding its international obligations, and the persistence of the Taiwan issue will ensure 1C2S's endurance through, and possibly beyond, 2047.

Questions over Hong Kong's long-term future have been raised ever since Britain first signed a 99-year lease for much of the territory in 1898. As 1997 approached, the two governments, following years of negotiations, issued the Joint Sino-British Declaration of 1984. It outlined a grand

compromise: in exchange for Britain's peaceful return of Hong Kong, China agreed to create a corpus separatum from the mainland for Hong Kong. Beijing promised, "the current social and economic systems in Hong Kong will remain unchanged, and so will the life-style" for 50 years.¹ Hong Kong and its residents would retain political freedoms and a market economy. The agreement vested the new Hong Kong Special Administrative Region with a mini-constitution of Basic Laws and a semi-independent government of three branches: a legislature elected by the people, an independent judicial system, and a chief executive elected by an elite 1200-member group meant to represent the diversity of constituent interests and opinions in Hong Kong.

In the 20 years since the handover, 1C2S has seen numerous tests, the biggest of which came in 2014 with the Umbrella Revolution. While in the original Basic Laws the chief executive is not directly elected, Article 45 allows for reform to direct elections.² In 2007, Beijing agreed to carry out these electoral reforms beginning with the 2017 executive election. In 2014, the central

China's interests in ensuring the rule of law necessary for a global financial hub, upholding its international obligations, and the persistence of the Taiwan issue will ensure 1C2S's endurance through, and possibly beyond, 2047.

government announced their proposal: all eligible citizens could vote in the executive election, no longer just the elite 1200-member body. However, the slate of three candidates would be effectively selected by Beijing.³ This provoked widespread protests in late 2014. Despite international media attention, the protests failed to bring about real change to the electoral system. The Hong Kong

Legislature ultimately rejected the 2014 proposal and the 2017 election went forward, with the elite body voting to elect Carrie Lam, a staunchly pro-Beijing candidate. Another test came in late 2015, with the extrajudicial extradition of Hong Kong booksellers. Under 1C2S, Hong Kong maintains an independent judicial system. But in what appears to have been a direct violation of the Joint-Declaration and Basic Laws, Chinese authorities abducted, illegally extradited, and detained these booksellers on trumped-up charges.⁴

These and other violations of the laws and principles underpinning 1C2S have sparked fears that the guarantees China made to Hong Kongers about their future are being eroded by Beijing.⁵ Yet despite these repeated tests of the 1C2S regime, the system will likely persist through 2047, thanks to its direct contribution to Beijing's central interest in overall stability and continuity. First, it facilitates the stability needed for Hong Kong's continued status as a global financial hub. Much like at the end of the colonial era, the business community's need for stability is key to Hong Kong's economic health.⁶ The expiration of 1C2S already engenders problems for property rights and mortgages, loan repayments, and bond issuance.⁷ A sudden or drastic change to 1C2S, or the community's loss of faith in Hong Kong's governing structure, could throw the economy and financial markets both in Hong Kong and mainland China into flux. For a government that derives much of its continued legitimacy from economic growth, such a situation is undesirable. Given this need, any replacement of 1C2S would require years of advanced notice to ensure the stability of financial markets.

Additionally, the 1984 Joint-Declaration is a litmus test of China's dedication to the international order. While Great Britain has no direct mechanism to enforce the Joint-Declaration, Beijing is no doubt keenly aware of the international ramifications of renegeing on a binding treaty agreement. A significant violation

of the agreement could be seen internationally as an affront by China to an international order it strenuously claims it is not challenging. Such an outright violation would engender further distrust in the international community of China's rise, and its intentions and reliability in the future.

Finally, 1C2S is viewed as a possible model for the peaceful reunification of Taiwan with the People's Republic of China, and its success serves as a useful diplomatic tool for Beijing.⁸ 1C2S remains the best possible scenario for reintegration without war or a sudden change in the political landscape. Since the Umbrella Revolution and the election of anti-Beijing Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen, this remains a distant possibility. However, it is in Beijing's direct interest to maintain this option to the Taiwanese people. A sudden renegeing of its obligations to Hong Kong would remove any remaining attraction that might exist in Taiwan for a 1C2S-style negotiated reunification.

This decade's two major tests of 1C2S provide strong cause for concern over Hong Kong's future. Overall, many point to Beijing's ever-growing desire to control all aspects of life in China and Hong Kong as proof that 1C2S simply will not last. 1C2S, however, should not be seen as a framework for full liberal-democracy. Not even in the colonial era did Hong Kong enjoy that. Rather, it is a compromise over what the Chinese Communist Party can tolerate under its rule. Beijing will most likely continue to assert political control over Hong Kong in ever-more heavy-handed ways. Nonetheless, specific political and economic constraints provide hope that 1C2S will endure.

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The Dangerous Opioid from India

Natalie Tecimer

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THE OPIOID CRISIS CONTINUES TO CLAIM THOUSANDS OF LIVES every month across the United States, driven in part by use of fentanyl, a powerful opioid primarily manufactured in China. But it is another opioid, tramadol, that threatens to wreak global havoc, and another Asian giant that is pouring it into the world.

In 2015 (the most recent year with full data), 12.5 million people in the United States abused opioids, and it is estimated that 24,861 people died from overdoses of prescription and synthetic opioids.¹ Some expect these numbers to have tripled for 2016,² and six U.S. states have now declared public health emergencies to combat the opioid crisis.³ In October, President Trump declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency.

Fentanyl is at the center of the opioid crisis in the United States. It is used as a direct substitute for heroin, but it is 50 times more powerful than heroin. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, meaning it requires precursor chemicals to manufacture, and it is prescribed as a pain medication. In the past two years,

however, illicit manufacturing and importing of fentanyl has skyrocketed. The death rate from synthetic drug use reflects this trend.

China is the number one supplier of fentanyl to the United States. China is also the main supplier to Canada and Mexico. Cartels in the latter usually then smuggle it into the United States. After years of persistent efforts, the U.S.-China bilateral crackdown on opioid trafficking has started to see recent success. In mid-October, two Chinese nationals were indicted for running a large illicit fentanyl distribution network and their three American accomplices were arrested.⁴

Fentanyl exported from China to the United States comes in several different forms: fentanyl, its precursor chemicals, fentanyl variants, and fentanyl-laced counterfeit prescription opioids.⁵

India exports many controlled and prescription drugs to the United States, including fentanyl. Indian fentanyl exports to the United States are a fraction of those from China, but India does export tramadol, which is a growing issue for the United States. However, unlike China, which has now designated

over 100 fentanyl variants and precursors on its list of controlled substances,⁶ India has not placed fentanyl, or most other opioids, on its controlled substances list, easing production and export. India only regulates 17 of the 24 basic precursor chemicals for fentanyl (as listed by the UN 1988 Convention against Drugs).⁷

In the Middle East and Africa, the less potent opioid tramadol, not fentanyl, is responsible for the opioid crisis. India is the biggest supplier.

Tramadol is a less powerful opioid, though more potent if taken orally than injected due to its chemical makeup, and it is not regulated by international conventions nor in many countries. Tramadol is prescribed as a pain medication, but because of tramadol's stimulant effects, it can allow people to feel high-functioning while taking dangerously high doses. This combination is dangerous: cities with high tramadol abuse have reported increasingly high rates of traffic accidents. In Garoua, Cameroon, hospitals can trace 80 percent of all traffic accidents resulting in hospital visits to tramadol,⁸ suggesting that at least half of adults in the city use tramadol. To make it even more apparent how dire tramadol addiction has become, hospital staff reported that people waiting for

patients outside of the hospital gates would start convulsing, the sign of a tramadol overdose.⁹ In some countries, tramadol deaths outnumber heroin deaths.¹⁰

In the past year, U.S. law enforcement officials estimate that 1 billion tramadol tablets have been seized leaving India by the United States and its international partners in counter-narcotics, and actual exports could be exponentially greater. Southeast Asian countries, which

also do not regulate tramadol, are frequently used as transit countries, with tramadol repackaged in creative ways. Often, the tramadol is not seized until it reaches the Middle East.¹¹ The former Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) attaché for South Asia, the India Country Office, reported that “Libya has emerged as a significant hub for tramadol trafficking” and “the vast majority of these tramadol shipments originated from India via commercial shipping containers.”

Indian tramadol networks have even been linked to ISIS and Boko Haram,

In the past year, U.S. law enforcement officials estimate that 1 billion tramadol tablets have been seized leaving India by the United States and its international partners in counter-narcotics, and actual exports could be exponentially greater.



raising security concerns. There have been several instances of seizures of tramadol from India destined for Islamic State territory. In May, \$75 million worth of tramadol, about 37 million pills, was seized in Italy en route to Misrata and Tobruk, Libya¹²; ISIS had purchased them for resale to ever-growing markets. The group has been involved in both the trafficking and consumption of tramadol,¹³ and the quantity of drugs being purchased by ISIS is so great that it can be assumed the group is selling a significant portion for profit.

The 37 million tramadol tablets purchased by ISIS had taken a familiar route from India through Southeast Asia. Neither India nor many Southeast Asian countries regulate tramadol, and since tramadol is not on the international drug schedule, it is only regulated if individual countries decide to classify it. But, if only one country classifies the drug and places it under regulation, it will not necessarily affect the supply. This was a problem for Egypt, which scheduled tramadol in hope of curbing abuse. Despite this, Indian tramadol exports to Egypt continued to rise and tramadol is the most abused drug in Egypt today.¹⁴

Tramadol is not on the international drug schedule, or a controlled substances list that mandates regulation, under the World Health Organization (WHO) and so individual countries' attempts to regulate it often fail. For example, Egypt first scheduled tramadol in 2002 because of growing tramadol use, but since tramadol was not on the international drug schedule, India was not obligated to notify Egypt of an upcoming tramadol export. Thus, Indian exports to Egypt continued to rise and tramadol is the most abused drug in Egypt today. Egypt's National Council on Fighting and Treating Addiction reported in 2013 that 30 percent of adults abused drugs.¹⁵

One potential reason India does not regulate tramadol, or other opioids, is the lack of domestic concern about addiction. However, India does have addiction problems, and India's Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh specifically acknowledged that tramadol addiction is a growing problem.¹⁶ Yet, the government acknowledgement has not been sufficient; government corruption plays a role with the pharmaceutical corporations, wholesale exporters, and internet companies responsible for the illicit flow of opioids out of India. In their 2017 report on corruption, Transparency International found that India had the highest bribery rates across the Asia Pacific region.¹⁷

The lack of international regulations also contributes to the problem. The WHO used the case of Egypt scheduling tramadol in 2002 and up-scheduling (labeling it as a greater threat) in 2009, presented by a German pharmaceutical company, as evidence that when tramadol is scheduled, consumption for legitimate medical use declines.¹⁸ Although the WHO acknowledges that

tramadol is widely abused and that there have been huge seizures of the drug, it decided against critical review and international controls.¹⁹ The United States finally added tramadol to its drug schedule in 2013, as a Schedule IV drug, out of five classes, meaning it is regulated less than other drugs like heroin, fentanyl, methadone, or oxycodone.

Not only does the United States need to work closely with India to ensure tramadol misuse does not escalate at home, but more critically the U.S. needs to pay close attention to the networks and workarounds India has established in the tramadol trade, and prevent them from being used for fentanyl. The 2017 National Security Strategy advocated a stronger U.S.-India strategic partnership,²⁰ and with the Trump administration's prioritization of the opioid epidemic, this issue should be high on the U.S.-India partnership agenda.

Tramadol is cheap, widely available, and extensively abused. It is easily purchased by ISIS and anyone who does a google search for "tramadol from India." Tramadol's global networks raise significant security concerns and have great potential to be used for other drugs or illicit goods. As the world pays closer attention to fentanyl from China, there is room for another major supplier to the United States. India has been slow to regulate precursor chemicals and does not regulate fentanyl or tramadol. Indian traffickers have developed the worldwide networks. The drug threat from India requires a greater level of U.S.-India cooperation because it is too high to ignore.

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Distribute and Conquer: Refugees in the European Union

Ia Tserodze

TERMINOLOGY, FACTS, AND FIGURES

The Syrian conflict has become the cause of the world's largest humanitarian and displacement crisis since World War II. Over 65.6 million people worldwide are in urgent need of safety and aid, as a consequence of conflict and natural disasters. During just 2016, 31.1 million people were internally displaced—the equivalent of one displaced person every second.¹ These displaced people include refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum-seekers. In order to find adequate solutions to the issue that affects individuals on local, regional, and global levels, it is essential to distinguish between the names and classifications of these groups:

Refugees are people who have involuntarily left their native country, and cannot return because of ongoing war, conflict, or a direct threat of persecution or death. Refugees are protected under international law by the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which defines what refugees are and outlines the basic rights afforded to them.² Asylum-seekers are

refugees who have made a claim and are waiting for it to be accepted or rejected; internally displaced people are, like refugees, people who have unwillingly left their home, but who have not crossed their country's state border.³

Migrants, on the other hand, are a group that is not forced to flee their home country, but rather do so in order to improve their standards of living by seeking, for example, employment or educational opportunity. Migrants are not protected by the same laws as refugees, since they do not face any direct threats, and in the chance of their return home, will continue to receive the protection of their own government.⁴

Strict distinction among these classifications is integral to solving the central issue. Since each group must be treated within different legal realms, states can only guarantee their maximum amount of support if correct identification takes place. Merging refugees and migrants into a single group and using terms interchangeably affects the implementation of legal protection: national governments deal with migrants under their own immigrations processes,

whereas refugees have to be addressed through norms of refugee protection and asylum that are defined in both national legislation and international law.

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Relevance and Recent Developments

The European Union, a hub for refugees, continues to be a leader in combating forced displacement. During the previous year, it donated over €1972 million to humanitarian assistant projects, and created

a special trust fund for Africa, due to a consistent refugee influx from across the Mediterranean, which has approximately €3.3 billion.⁵ Member state contributions have, however, been largely disproportionate, with Norway and Switzerland contributing around €375 million, while Bulgaria, which will soon take on EU presidency, contributed merely €50,000.⁶

Disparities in contributing efforts have not just been seen in funding for dealing with this crisis, but also in sharing the burdens of 2015 redistribution quota system. Most prominently, the Visegrad Group (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary) remain reluctant to take in refugees. Because of geography, the burden is put on Italy and Greece, which have suffered from the overwhelming majority of potential asylum seekers. This has resulted in inhumane conditions at refugee camps, due to the lack of facilities, resources, and access to basic services. Hence, equal redistribution and the improvement of these facilities remains a consistent and evident issue.

The most difficult aspect of the problem to tackle is its ever-shifting nature. Recently, Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council, published a statement on mandatory quotas, calling them “highly divisive” and “ineffective.”⁷ This act caused a negative response from the European Commission, saying that quotas are mandatory in order to ensure the practical implementation of Europe’s founding value—dignity.⁸ On December 7, the commission further issued a statement against the Visegrad Group, stating that it was taking Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland to court over their defiance to comply with the EU decision to relocate refugees based on a quota.⁹

Policy Recommendation

The abolishment of mandatory quotas has the potential to cause even further negative consequences, as member states may now, within legal norms, follow the example of Visegrad Group countries. It would further undermine the efforts

that countries, such as in Scandinavia, have put into relocating refugees, granting them asylum, and initiating programs for their integration and inclusion. What the European Union needs is an innovative framework that provides an alternative to meeting the mandatory quota: a policy that can contribute to lifting the burden off border countries, namely Italy and Greece, yet be flexible enough to account for disparities in national political views and circumstances.

If the European Union fails to alter its current policies, then it risks the potential of a further political fallout. Border countries require assistance with two main areas: the “transferring” of refugees from their territory to other member states, and the lack of physical resources and facilities to house and protect future asylum seekers. Bearing these two issues in mind, a more flexible policy can suggest the following: If a country refuses to house refugees, then it has to provide monetary support to better the conditions at refugee camps. These financial alternatives would have to adequately match the number of refugees a national government is reluctant to relocate: the fewer refugees they are willing to take, the bigger their monetary contribution. Financial contributions, however, would also have to be set in accordance with the member states’ GDP and economic stability levels. The new policy would portray monetary contribution as a feasible alternative, rather than a punitive sanction, which is the form that it takes as of now.

Donald Tusk argues that the European Union should make migration a part of the union’s long-term budget, rather than rely solely on ad hoc contributions.¹⁰ In light of Tusk’s agenda and the concerns raised by the commission, the above policy seems a feasible middle ground—contributing further to an increase in financial assistance, while keeping mandatory quotas in place.

Disparities among member states, and disagreement between EU institutions and national governments, cannot be avoided. Hence, altering policies to more flexible alternatives, while benefiting the refugees, lifting the burden off of border countries, and giving more autonomy to the member states, is vital in creating a unified policy agenda.

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Bad Neighbor? How the European Neighbourhood Policy Has Failed in Moldova

Sara Sandström

THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA WAS ONCE CONSIDERED THE MOST SUCCESSFUL test case of the European Union's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).¹ The ENP is intended for building security and prosperity in the European neighborhood and for cooperation on areas such as democracy, rule of law, and social cohesion between the EU and its partner countries.² Today, it has become increasingly clear that the ENP is failing in Moldova through three key channels: failing to reform the judicial system, weakening democratic governance, and diminishing pro-EU sentiment in the country. The EU must reckon with this failure and find better means to achieve meaningful change in its near abroad.

Case 1: Reform of the Judicial System

A key reform Moldova pledged to implement under the Association Agenda between Moldova and the EU was reform of the judicial system.³ This Association Agenda was developed June 26, 2014, to prepare for the Association Agreement that would further integrate Moldova and the EU.⁴ Funding for the justice reform project would be granted, were sufficient progress to be made.⁵

The lack of progress on the justice reforms has since been questioned, and the EU suspended one payment to Moldova in 2015, and another in 2017.⁶ Already in 2015, EU ambassador to Moldova Pirkka Tapiola highlighted the Moldovan government's evident lack of motivation in implementing reforms.⁷

This is not surprising given that Moldova suffers from a high level of corruption and state capture, where politically connected actors take a leading role in policymaking that benefits them.⁸ Worryingly, the Moldovan government has not responded to the suspension of payments by continuing with reforms, while insisting that progress had been made.⁹

Case 2: Undemocratic Changes to the Electoral System

During this same period, structural changes in Moldova have weakened democratic governance. In July 2017, the Moldovan government replaced the proportional electoral system for a mixed one. The Moldovan opposition was staunchly against the reform.¹⁰

The Venice Commission and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) voiced concerns regarding these changes.¹¹ In a joint statement, they criticized the process by which the bill had been debated. They said it had not included enough public debate, with little input from civil society, that the electoral reforms lacked support from other parties, and that the new system could increase corruption.¹² The EU concurred with the statement and advised against the reform.¹³ The government of Moldova disregarded this advice and implemented the changes.¹⁴

Case 3: Diminishing Pro-EU Sentiment

Despite the ruling Democratic Party's nominal pro-EU orientation, support for the EU has declined. The share of Moldovans who favored EU accession declined from 72 to 40 percent between 2007 and 2015.¹⁵ In March 2017, 42 percent of those polled thought Moldova should join the EU over any other economic union.¹⁶

Recent electoral results also show weakening support for candidates associated with pro-EU positions. Pro-Russian candidate Igor Dodon was elected president in 2016, defeating the pro-EU Maia Sandu, although there were accusations of election fraud.¹⁷ Polling ahead of the 2018 parliamentary elections shows this trend continuing. The pro-Russian Socialist Party led a recent poll published in March 2017, whereas the pro-EU Democratic Party currently in government only received 4 percent support.¹⁸ Though parliamentary elections will likely hinge on domestic policy issues such as corruption and unemployment that are cited as the most pressing issues, relations with the EU and Russia divide the Democrats and the Socialists, currently the country's biggest parties.¹⁹

The European Neighbourhood Policy has failed to address the core issue plaguing the Moldovan political system, corruption.

Focus on Corruption

These cases demonstrate the EU's failure to achieve its lofty goals in Moldova through the ENP. Stalled judicial reforms show that monetary incentives

associated with the ENP have had little to no impact. The EU's protests to changes to the electoral law prove even these softer forms of pressure ineffective. Meanwhile support for the EU in Moldova has declined.

The ENP has failed to address the core issue plaguing the Moldovan political system, corruption. The EU should emphasize addressing state capture by encouraging more inclusive, process-oriented policymaking. Rather than

dictating specific policy goals, supporting more inclusive policymaking would both reduce corruption and support future reform efforts.²⁰

Moldova hopes to one day become a member of the EU.²¹ However, promising eventual membership carries risks. Not keeping the promise or postponing it repeatedly can weaken support for the EU in Moldova. For the ENP to succeed in Moldova, the EU must orient its policy to tackle the core issue of corruption, while refraining from making unrealistic promises.

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Jemaah Islamiyah: Another Manifestation of al Qaeda Core's Global Strategy?

Charles Vallee

RECENT ANALYSIS SHEDS CRITICAL LIGHT ON THE CURRENT STATE

OF JEMAAH ISLAMIAH (JI), an al Qaeda-linked organization responsible for a series of historical attacks across Southeast Asia. The Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) notes that Jemaah Islamiyah is not an “immediate threat,” but rather one with a “25-year-time frame for achieving an Islamic State.”¹ Expert Bilvheer Singh of the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) acknowledges that JI has “adopted a strategic decision to lie low in line with the concept of *I'dad*,” which advocates for “in-depth preparation to participate in a future jihad.”²

The analysis correctly notes that regional governments must not mistake Jemaah Islamiyah's inactivity for organizational or ideological decay. Despite a series of splinters and internal divisions, JI is gaining strength by remaining strategically dormant to avoid security forces, marketing a more moderate face to gain local support, and expanding its operational capabilities to eventually return to its jihadist roots. However, more important to consider is that this “lying low” strategy is not unique to JI. Since

around 2009, al Qaeda's core (AQC) leadership has made a concerted effort to export this strategy to its affiliates and proxies in Syria,³ Mali,⁴ Tunisia,⁵ Libya,⁶ Somalia,⁷ and Yemen.⁸

Regional governments would be well-served to consider the Jemaah Islamiyah's new approach in the context of al Qaeda's global strategy rather than in a vacuum. A confluence of factors suggests the ties are stronger than previously suggested, and that AQC may have had a hand in JI's strategic pivot.

There are two main factors that, when put together, may suggest that JI retains close ties with its mother organization and that JI's current approach is an unrecognized manifestation of AQC's broader global strategy:

1. The continued significance and actions of a core cadre of leaders that were present when JI originally cultivated its relationship with al Qaeda's core leadership, including Abu Rusdan, Abu Fatih, and Umar Patek.⁹
2. The almost identical timing and nature of Jemaah Islamiyah's strategic shift when compared to al Qaeda Core's. Although

open-source confirmation of this is scant, the coincidental timing suggests that AQC may have had a part in guiding JI's strategic pivot.

Despite a series of splinters and internal divisions, JI is gaining strength by remaining strategically dormant to avoid security forces, marketing a more moderate face to gain local support, and expanding its operational capabilities to eventually return to its jihadist roots.

Al Qaeda Core and Its Potential Hand in JI's Strategic Shift

The influence that AQC asserts over JI is more difficult to target when compared to instances involving intercepted communications regarding AQ affiliates in the areas aforementioned. However, it is unlikely JI's strategic shift was enacted in a vacuum.

As Zachary Abuza of the National War College, notes Jemaah Islamiyah has historically "always turned outward to develop its own capabilities."¹⁰ Two factors suggest that the role JI plays within al Qaeda's larger strategy, and the connection between Jemaah Islamiyah and al Qaeda's core leadership, may be much more significant than previously noted.

Leadership Ties

Though set back by a series of arrests and killing, Jemaah Islamiyah's leadership still retains a core cadre of individuals that were present when the group original cultivated its relationship with AQC. One of these figures is Abu Rusdan, a former emir of Jemaah Islamiyah and "JI's public face for the last decade."¹¹ Rusdan has played a main role in shifting the organization's strategy, as he publicly announced the organization's decision to engage in I'dad.¹² As someone who fought¹³ with the mujahedeen in Pakistan alongside members that would go on to form al Qaeda's core, Rusdan is described as a "key pro-al Qaeda leader" in Indonesia by some experts.¹⁴

Additionally, Abdullah Anshori (Abu Fatih), one of JI's original members who fought in Afghanistan and Pakistan and previously ran JI operations in Indonesia, still plays a large role within the organization.¹⁵ The U.S. Treasury Department describes Anshori as "one of the most senior JI leaders still at large."¹⁶ These active members that were involved in originally cultivating its relationship with al Qaeda still constitute a significant portion of JI's spine, which may signify that their relationship with AQC is still intact.

Furthermore, in 2011, Pakistani authorities arrested Umar Patek in Abbottabad, Pakistan, four months before U.S. Navy SEALs killed Osama

bin Laden in the same town. Umar Patek was a leading member of Jemaah Islamiyah since its inception and played a major role in the 2002 Bali bombings. In the 1990s, Patek received training¹⁷ at al Qaeda facilities in Afghanistan and played a key role¹⁸ in training Abu Sayyaf militants in improvised explosive device (IED) construction in the southern Philippines. Patek left the southern Philippines in May of 2010 and traveled to Abbottabad, Pakistan, in what Indonesian Defense Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro called an attempt to “meet Osama Bin Laden.”¹⁹ As Zachary Abuza notes, Patek was the “natural person for this task as he has experience in Pakistan and Afghanistan and has been in charge of JI’s training in the past.”²⁰ Police detected and arrested Patek after following Tahir Shezad, an al Qaeda operative, to Abbottabad.²¹ Though the U.S. government at the time said it appeared to “have been a pure coincidence,”²² the presence of a high-level JI operative in unusual proximity to Osama bin Laden may signify a greater level of ties between AQC and JI than some previously suggest.

Simultaneous Shift in Strategy

The almost identical nature and timing of JI’s strategy implementation compared to AQC warrants further consideration, as both organizations began stressing the importance of cultivating local support and “lying low” around a very similar time. Following Abu Mus’ab al Zarqawi’s refusal to listen to AQC’s advice advising him to reduce excessive violence against Iraqi Shia, AQC considered “the idea of shifting their brand away from AQI”²³ around 2008–2009 to market a more indigenous face, better cultivate local support, and avoid international attention. These reforms were later institutionalized in al Qaeda head Ayman Zawahiri’s “General Guidelines for Jihad” in 2013.²⁴

JI’s strategic shift happened within the same timeframe. IPAC notes that after the organization chose its new leader in 2008, it began to “focus on dakwah rather than operations (amaliyah).” In 2009, JI created an “above-ground dakwah organization” called Majelis Dakwah Umat Islam (MDUI), set on appealing to a wider range of Muslims of all levels of conservatism. In an interview with Reuters, leader Abu Rusdan stated, “We must be peaceful up to a certain point, otherwise how will we win public support?”²⁵ Rusydan also lives openly in Java and frequently leads prayers at a mosque in his neighborhood.²⁶

Both Abu Rusdan’s superficial moderation and the creation of MDUI allow Jemaah Islamiyah to market a moderate face to better sympathize with local grievances and gain the support of a wider range of Muslims. However, it is important to consider that at the same time, JI is secretly amassing weapons and ammunition.²⁷ Jemaah Islamiyah has also sent members to fight alongside al Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al Nusra, now Hay’at Tahrir al Sham, “for short,

intensive training courses” that allowed them to build “skills that could eventually be used at home.”²⁸ This two-pronged approach is likely an attempt to market a moderate face of JI while remaining committed to its principles of jihadism. This half-open, half-clandestine strategy is consistent with that of al Qaeda core leadership’s, and directly coincides with the timing of AQC’s implementation of it in other parts of the globe.

Conclusion

Recent analyses regarding Jemaah Islamiyah are right to point out the strategic dormancy of Jemaah Islamiyah and its implications for regional security. However, regional governments must also consider the extent to which JI is playing a role, if any, in AQC’s global strategy and the level of current ties between the two organizations. JI’s strategic shift must not be considered in a vacuum, but rather in the context of al Qaeda’s global strategy, as it may well be an unrecognized manifestation of AQC’s long-term approach. AQC’s global strategy is well reported on in other parts of the world, but policymakers, analysts, and military practitioners must consider its relevance in Southeast Asia. As al Qaeda proxies in Syria, Yemen, the Sahel, North Africa, and Somalia garner attention, we must not rule out the potential that Zawahiri views JI as an equally important puzzle piece in AQC’s global strategy.

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